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ABSTRACT

In fall 1994, 14 state Migrant Education Programs were receiving direct federal grants to administer Migrant Even Start projects. These projects provide migrant families with an integrated program of early childhood education, adult education, and parenting education. As part of the national evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program, this report describes three Migrant Even Start projects, their evaluation activities and concerns, and the special challenges that they face. The projects are located in Yuma, Arizona; Gettysburg, Pennsylvania; and Berlin and Cambria, Wisconsin. Project descriptions cover program structure and administration, characteristics of the community served, family recruitment, content and delivery of Even Start services, staff, coordination of service components, participation and followup strategies, evaluation and the Even Start Information System (ESIS), and conclusions. Major challenges confronting Migrant Even Start projects include hiring qualified staff who are bilingual, bicultural, and knowledgeable about the migrant lifestyle; adapting service delivery to family schedules; collaborating with other community migrant services; providing continuity of services between sites; providing support services; dealing with migrant families' isolation in the community; and finding quality materials written in Spanish. In comparison to Even Start projects nationally, Migrant Even Start projects are unique in participant characteristics, families' strong commitment to the project, strong staff commitment and responsiveness, scheduling of services, and staffing patterns. Recommendations include increasing interproject collaboration and technical assistance. Contains 20 references and a topic guide for site visits. (SV)

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NATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

REPORT ON MIGRANT EVEN START PROJECTS

1997

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RC 021135

NATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM: REPORT ON MIGRANT EVEN START PROJECTS

Abstract

National Evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program: Report on Migrant Even Start Projects provides a descriptive account of three Migrant Even Start projects (Arizona, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin) visited in October and November of 1994 as part of the national evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program. Fu Associates, Ltd. and Abt Associates Inc. produced the report under contract to the U.S. Department of Education's Planning and Evaluation Service (PES).

Authorized under Section 1202(a)(1)(A) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended, the Migrant Even Start Program in 1994-95 consisted of 14 grants to State Migrant Education Programs (MEPs). These grants provided for the achievement of the three Even Start goals for currently migratory families. These goals are to help parents become full partners in the education of their children, to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners, and to provide literacy training for their parents.

This report was prepared under contract to the U.S. Department of Education. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department, and no official endorsement by the Department should be inferred.

NATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE EVEN START FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM

REPORT ON MIGRANT EVEN START PROJECTS

1997

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This executive summary highlights findings from the report on the three Migrant Even Start projects visited as part of the national evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program that Fu Associates, Ltd. and Abt Associates Inc. are conducting for the U.S. Department of Education. This summary begins with general information about migrant families, followed by a discussion of the Migrant Even Start Program, and the design and purpose of the study. Subsequent sections include summaries of the three migrant projects visited, a description of evaluation activities and concerns of the projects, the special challenges that these projects face, and effective practices being used, and recommendations for supporting and strengthening Migrant Even Start projects.

Description of Migrant Families

The old saying, "If you are eating it, a migrant picked it," is still true for many of the fruits and vegetables sold in this country today (Stoops, 1980). Migrant workers have been a fixture in American agriculture for decades and remain a vital source of labor to our country's farmers. In 1992, estimates of all those engaged in migrant labor ranged from 1.7 million to 6 million (Trotter, 1992). Migrant workers have traditionally traveled in three specific regions of the United States, commonly referred to as the eastern, central, and western migrant streams.

The underlying reason for migration is economic, but workers move to certain areas for a variety of reasons, including changing agricultural conditions, advice of neighbors, family connections, loyalty to certain growers, and available housing. Some families have been migrating to the same area for generations and have as many connections in the receiving site as they do in their home base. Many migrant workers move with their entire family or travel in caravans with extended families and friends. Other migrant workers travel alone because they are single or because they choose not to move their families.

Most studies find that the majority of migrant farm workers are Hispanic and foreign-born. One source characterizes the migrant population to be as much as 95 percent immigrants and 90 percent Hispanic (Trotter, 1992). The majority of sources report that migrant workers are U.S. citizens or legal residents (Diaz et al., 1989; Trotter, 1992).

Migrant workers are among the most poorly paid workers in the country — in 1986, the annual income for migrant workers was less than $6,500 (Shotland, 1989). In addition to poverty, migrant families face many other hardships, such as limited health care, poor nutrition, and inadequate housing conditions. These problems are intensified for migrant families by frequent moves, language barriers, long work hours, and isolation and prejudice in the community.

The Migrant Even Start Program

The Migrant Even Start Program is one component of the Even Start Family Literacy Program, which is designed to:

> ... improve the educational opportunities of the nation's children and adults by integrating early childhood education and adult education for parents into a unified program ... The program shall be implemented through cooperative projects that build on existing community resources to create a new range of services. (P.L. 100-297, Section 1051).[1]

Even Start began as a demonstration program administered by the U.S. Department of Education that provided school districts with four-year discretionary grants for family literacy projects. In 1992, the program, while remaining a competitive discretionary grant program, was transferred to the states, although two small set-asides remain for direct Federal grants for migrant education projects and grants to Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

At the time of this study, in the Fall of 1994, there are fourteen state Migrant Education Programs receiving direct federal grants to administer Migrant Even Start projects. The Migrant Even Start projects are similar to the regular Even Start projects in that they provide participating families with an integrated program of early childhood education, adult education, and parenting education. However, Migrant Even Start projects are unique in that they work with a population that moves frequently and whose home base may or may not be where the project is located.

Study Design and Purpose

In March 1994, the Planning and Evaluation Service in the U.S. Department of Education awarded a contract to Fu Associates, Ltd., with a subcontract to Abt Associates Inc., to design and implement the Even Start Information System (ESIS). One of the tasks of this evaluation is to conduct a special study of the Migrant Even Start Program in order to:

- increase knowledge of the Migrant Even Start projects;
- identify the unique program management issues that these projects face;
- describe effective practices used by migrant projects; and
- assess the appropriateness of the ESIS for migrant projects.

The study design called for site visits to three Migrant Even Start projects. Criteria for selecting sites included geographic location, project organization, length of service period, and special

[1]The law in effect at the time of these case studies has been superseded by P.L. 103-382, effective July 1, 1995. PL 103-382 also has a set-aside for prison populations, Section 1202(a)(2). This new law has revised the definitions of migrant students such that there is no distinction between current and former migrant students, and eligibility is based on a move within the last 36 months. See Section 1309(2) of P.L. 103-382.

program features. The following three projects were chosen for the site visits: Pennsylvania to represent the eastern stream; Wisconsin to represent the central stream; and Arizona to represent the western stream.

The site visits took place in October and November of 1994 and were conducted by two-person teams comprised of one staff member each from Abt Associates and Fu Associates. The teams were on-site at each Migrant Even Start project for approximately two days to interview staff and observe project activities.

Summaries of the Migrant Even Start Projects Visited

Brief descriptions of the three Migrant Even Start projects visited are presented below.

Arizona Migrant Even Start Project

Primeros Pasos, the Migrant Even Start project in Arizona, is administered by the Crane school district and is located in an elementary school in Yuma. The project serves about 55 western stream migrants, the majority of whom are Mexican or Mexican-American. Many of the families migrate from California but there are some families who come from Mexico. The majority of families are two-parent families, and in many families the father is the primary wage earner and the mother works only during peak harvest periods. Many of the families live in Yuma for nine to 12 months of the year, although the father may leave for weeks or months to work in another area.

The project provides services year-round to families but the peak season is usually from November to March, the primary harvesting months. The project provides adult education, early childhood education, and parent education on-site with staff employed by the project, rather than through collaborations with community agencies. A project nurse, who maintains medical records and conducts routine health screenings, provides key support services to families.

Pennsylvania Migrant Even Start Project

The Migrant Even Start project in Pennsylvania is located in Gettysburg in the southern part of the state and serves 85 families from two rural counties. The region is well known for its fruit, but there also are numerous poultry processing plants in the area that employ migrants. The migrant families in this project follow the eastern stream and are mostly Hispanic with a small percentage of African-American and other ethnic groups. The majority of families served by the project are two-parent families in which both parents work full-time.

The project has two sites, one of which is co-located with its sponsor, the area Migrant Education Program (MEP). The MEP's facilities and numerous services are available to the project. In addition, the project is part of an extensive collaborative network of community

agencies serving migrant families. The majority of services in adult education and early childhood education are provided by community agencies; parent education is provided by project staff.

Wisconsin Migrant Even Start Project

Project CORES, the Migrant Even Start project in Wisconsin, is a multi-state collaborative administered by the Migrant Education Programs in Wisconsin, Texas, Montana, and Illinois. The project serves 85 central stream migrants. The majority of families in the project are Hispanic and migrate annually between their home base in Texas and one of the receiving states, between April and November, depending upon their work plans. The majority of families served by the project are two-parent families in which both parents work full-time.

Even Start services in the two Wisconsin sites (Berlin and Cambria) are provided by a combination of project staff and community agencies. Adult education focuses on ESL offered by local technical colleges or individual tutors. Early childhood education is provided by Head Start and the Even Start home visitors. Parent education occurs primarily during home visits. Continuity for participants is provided by coordinating services across the sites and transferring family records as the families move.

Evaluating Migrant Projects

Local evaluation activities vary across the Migrant Even Start projects. The Migrant Even Start projects in Wisconsin and Arizona employ evaluators who are conducting interviews and focus groups with participants and project staff, observing projects activities, and collecting data on family demographics and project operations. The Pennsylvania project has not had an evaluator until the summer of 1994, so local evaluation activities have been limited.

Overall, staff from Migrant Even Start projects did not express many concerns about the ESIS and feel that it is appropriate for use by migrant projects. Most questions focused on the schedule of data collection and reporting. Another general concern, not related to their migrant status, is how to record variations in services within sites. Specific issues about the ESIS relevant to migrant projects include coordinating data collection activities across sites for families being served by more than one site, obtaining an accurate count of total program participants when participants are served by multiple projects, and adapting the ESIS data collection schedule to conform to the project's operating schedule.

Project Challenges and Effective Practices

The major challenges confronting Migrant Even Start projects are:

- **Hiring qualified staff who are bilingual, bicultural, and knowledgeable about the migrant lifestyle.** A large percentage of migrant families are Hispanic, speak little or no English, and have cultural norms that may not be prevalent in non-Hispanic or non-migrant families. As a result, one of the most common challenges for projects is to hire qualified bilingual, bicultural staff who are familiar with the migrant lifestyle. Projects' responses have been to hire former migrants who can provide translation for project staff or to hire staff who work part-time at other agencies serving migrant families.

- **Adapting service delivery to match families' schedules.** Most migrant projects work with families during the growing season when both parents work long hours and are only available to participate in activities during evenings and weekends. In addition, families may only be in the site for a limited period of time (e.g., during the three-month harvest season). The solution for projects is to be flexible in service delivery and provide services in the evenings and on weekends.

- **Collaborating with other community agencies serving migrant families.** Community agencies serving migrant families have different goals, eligibility criteria, regulations, and policies. These differences can lead to misunderstandings, duplication of services, and a lack of coordination and collaboration among agencies. One strategy to address this issue has been to organize community networks of migrant agencies that meet regularly to discuss common issues and concerns.

- **Providing continuity of services between the home base and the receiving site.** Ensuring continuity of services is a major challenge for migrant projects because many participants relocate during the year. One response for staff has been to contact agencies in other sites serving the families and to coordinate services, even if coordination is limited to transferring records and progress notes. For multi-state projects such as the Wisconsin program, project staff coordinate services and curricula and transfer the families' records across sites.

- **Providing support services.** Most migrant families have multiple needs such as health care, transportation, and child care. Projects respond with a variety of arrangements to provide these services.

- **Dealing with isolation in the community.** Migrant families experience greater isolation than most families and are sometimes referred to as "the invisible community." Effective practices that projects have used to deal

with these challenges include extensive outreach to parents, organizing community activities for parents to increase their socialization opportunities with other families, providing advocacy, and forming relationships with community groups who can offer services to families.

- **Finding materials written in Spanish.** The lack of quality children's literature in Spanish and materials written in Spanish for parents are both major problems for most Migrant Even Start projects. Projects deal with this issue by translating important materials and community notices. Efforts also are made to share materials with community agencies serving Hispanic families and to encourage local libraries and community groups to obtain more Spanish materials.

Although they face many challenges, these Migrant Even Start projects have been able to provide services to meet the needs of the families they serve. However, projects cited a need for more technical assistance from the Department of Education. They also expressed the need for communication and collaboration with other Migrant Even Start projects.

Summary and Recommendations

In this section, we briefly review some of the distinctive characteristics of the Migrant Even Start projects that differ from regular Even Start projects. We conclude with recommendations for supporting and strengthening Migrant Even Start projects.

Unique Features of Migrant Even Start Projects

Most of the challenges experienced by Migrant Even Start projects result from trying to provide services that are responsive to the needs of migrant families yet true to the Even Start model of providing services in adult education, parent education, early childhood education, and parent-child activities in a home-based setting. Below we briefly summarize the unique features of the Migrant Even Start projects visited.

- **Participant Characteristics.** The majority of families in the Migrant Even Start projects are Hispanic, either monolingual Spanish or limited-English-proficient, and have an elementary-level education. These characteristics, which differ from the typical Even Start participant, affect the type of staff needed, the hours of operation, and the support services that Migrant Even Start projects provide.

- **Families' Commitment to the Project.** Parents' employment status, particularly in sites where both parents work full-time, necessitates a full-day program for young children and parents are eager to enroll their children in an early childhood program. Migrant adults also are reported by project staff to be very motivated to attend adult education classes to

learn English and to attain a GED certificate to improve their future employment opportunities. Staff report that this willingness to participate despite tremendous work and family responsibilities shows a commitment to the project that is not evident for participants in all regular Even Start projects.

- **Staff Commitment**. During our observations of project activities and discussions with staff, we were struck by the commitment and perseverance of the Migrant Even Start staff. It was clear that their approach to services is to adapt to the needs of the families rather than asking the families to accommodate to a more traditional program structure. Staff are very responsive to families' needs, both because some staff are former migrants themselves and because they have a lot of experience working with migrant families.

- **Intensity of Program Services**. Because migrant families do not have a lot of time to attend classes or to participate in home visits, Migrant Even Start projects cannot offer full-day programs or classes on four or five days of the week; adult education generally is offered two to three evenings a week. The effect of this more limited service delivery is exacerbated by the fact that many families do not stay in one area for more than a few months.

- **Staffing Pattern**. Another consequence of the families' work responsibilities is that Migrant Even Start services for adults are primarily offered evenings and weekends during the peak periods when the majority of migrant families are on-site. As a result, most Migrant Even Start projects cannot support full-time staff or twelve-month positions, but instead employ individuals who have other part-time employment. An advantage to this job-sharing is an automatic increase in communication and collaboration across agencies in the community and a sense of teamwork. However, there is not likely to be a full-time project administrator, which differs from the staffing arrangements in many regular Even Start projects.

Recommendations to Support the Migrant Even Start Program

In this last section, we put forth several recommendations to support the Migrant Even Start projects by recognizing the challenges they face and the strengths they offer.

- *Increase collaboration across Migrant Even Start project sites*. Encouraging more collaboration, both in existing projects and in the design of new projects, would increase the duration and continuity of services for Migrant Even Start families.

- *Encourage communication and collaboration between Migrant Even Start and Migrant Head Start*. Two of the three Migrant Even Start projects visited cited difficulties collaborating with Migrant Head Start. Discussions at the local and national levels about program eligibility and service provision would help projects pool resources, improve communication, and provide coordinated services to eligible migrant families.

- *Offer more technical assistance to Migrant Even Start projects.* Project staff expressed a need for more involvement and technical assistance from the Department of Education. Project staff also would like more opportunities to meet with staff at other migrant projects to discuss service delivery issues and to make connections for their families who move across sites.

- *Provide opportunities for Migrant Even Start projects to share their experiences with other Even Start projects.* Staff at Migrant Even Start projects have learned to deal with high family mobility, provide flexibility in service hours, and retain staff who reflect families' language and cultural heritage. This expertise would be valuable to other Even Start projects, many of whom face the same types of issues. In addition, this communication would reduce the sense of staff isolation among migrant projects and improve the integration of the migrant projects into the full Even Start program.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

This report presents a description of three Migrant Even Start projects visited as part of the national evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program that Fu Associates, Ltd. and Abt Associates Inc. are conducting for the U.S. Department of Education. This chapter provides the context for the study. We begin with a brief overview of the characteristics of migrant families and their lifestyle, followed by a summary of federal programs available to migrant families. The last part of the chapter discusses the Migrant Even Start Program and presents the purpose and design of these case studies.

Description of Migrant Families

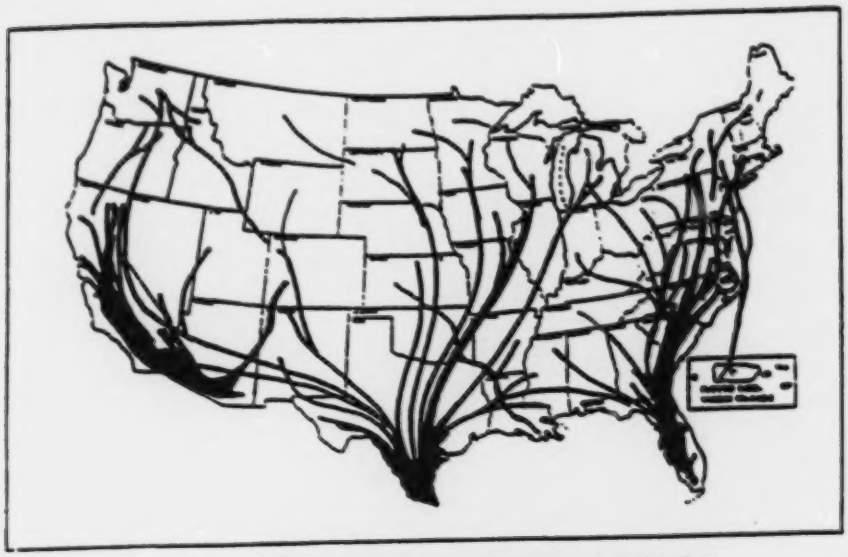
Background and History

The old saying, "If you are eating it, a migrant picked it," is still true for many of the fruits and vegetables sold in this country today (Stoops, 1980). Migrant workers have been a fixture in American agriculture for decades and remain a vital source of labor to our country's farmers. Migrant workers began performing agricultural work in the nineteenth century as the country began expanding toward the west coast. Early migrant workers on the west coast were Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, and Mexican. At the same time, workers on the east coast, mostly southern Whites or African-Americans, began travelling north to follow the crops. A dramatic change in the composition of the migrant population occurred from 1942 through 1964 as a result of the Bracero Program, a series of agreements between the United States and Mexico. The program allowed five million Mexican farm workers to enter the United States on a temporary basis to perform agricultural work. This program marked the Emergence of Mexico as the predominant source of migrant farm labor for the United States (National Commission on Migrant Education, 1992).

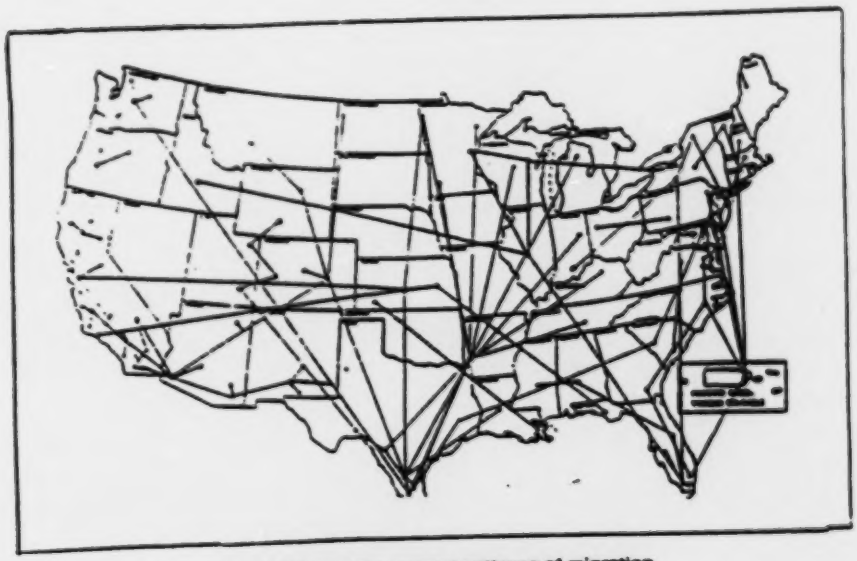
Migrant workers have traditionally travelled in three specific regions of the United States, commonly referred to as the eastern, central, and western migrant streams (Chavkin, 1991; Stoops, 1980; Shotland, 1989). The eastern stream includes Florida, the Northeast and the Mid-Atlantic states. There are many different ethnic groups within the eastern stream, including African-Americans, Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, whites, Jamaicans, Haitians, and Puerto Ricans. The central stream includes Mexico, Texas, the Central Plains states, and the Midwest. Migrant families in the central stream are mostly Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, with small numbers of Native Americans. The western stream includes California, the Northwest, and other western states. This stream includes mostly Mexicans and Mexican-Americans with an increasing number of Southeast Asians. Although these three streams are traditionally discussed in the literature, a recent study identified more current patterns of migration that are more diffuse than the traditional patterns (Diaz et al., 1989). Exhibit 1 illustrates both the traditional and the current migration patterns.

Exhibit 1

Patterns of Migration



Map 1: Shows the traditional pattern of migration identified by the U.S. Government



Map 2: Shows the current patterns of migration - identified by the ethnographic data

Reprinted from Diaz et al., 1989.

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At present there are migrant workers in every state in the United States except Hawaii, with the highest concentrations in California, Texas, and Florida. According to sales figures, the largest number of seasonal farm workers are employed in the smallest sector of the nation's agricultural work: fruits, vegetables, and horticulture (National Commission on Migrant Education, 1992). In addition to work in the fields, migrant workers also are employed in dairy and livestock work, fishing, lumber, canning, and packaging.

The Migrant Lifestyle

There are great variations in the reasons why migrant workers move, where they move, and how they move. The underlying reason for migration is economic but workers move to certain areas for a variety of reasons, including changing agricultural conditions, advice of neighbors, family connections, loyalty to certain growers, or available housing. Some families have been migrating to the same area for generations and have as many connections in the receiving site as they do in their home base. Many migrant workers move with their entire family, and large numbers of families travel in caravans with extended families and friends. Other migrant workers travel alone because they are single or because they choose not to move their families.

While the migrant lifestyle conjures up images of constant movement and travel, there is more consistency in the migrant population than commonly thought. The length of time that a migrant family stays in one location varies a great deal, depending upon the work that it is doing. Some workers move to one area (the receiving site) for the entire harvest season, which may be up to six months, and then return to their home base. Others move between sites, staying short periods of time in each, just long enough to complete a particular crop harvest. Migrant workers are employed for varying amounts of time during the year. For most, the work is seasonal and temporary; they work while they are in the receiving site and are unemployed while in their home base. A small number of migrants, such as workers who travel between California and Arizona, may work throughout the year.

An increasing number of migrant families are settling out, that is, staying in the receiving site year-round, or moving only during certain periods. A GAO study conducted in six school districts in California, Texas, and Florida found that 40 percent of the migrant students sampled did not miss any school and migrated only during the summer, over holiday breaks, or before initial school enrollment (General Accounting Office, 1983). This trend is confirmed from more recent 1991 Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS) data which show that 68 percent of migrant students remain in their home base throughout the school year (National Commission on Migrant Education, 1991).[1]

[1]The Migrant Student Record Transfer System was discontinued in the spring of 1995.

Agencies and programs serving migrant families differentiate between families who are currently migrating and those who have settled out.[2] For example, the Title I Migrant Education Program (MEP) defines a current migrant student as one who has moved across school district lines at least once in the past 12 months for his or her guardian or family member to obtain employment in the agriculture or fishing industry; a former migrant child, according to the MEP, is one who has moved across school district lines at least once in the past five years but not within the past 12 months (Rudes and Willette, 1990).[3] A recent study of the Title I Migrant Education Program found that 56 percent of MEP participants are former migrants and 44 percent are current migrants (Strang et al., 1993).

Characteristics of Migrant Families

Creating a profile of a typical migrant family is a difficult task for several reasons. First, migrant families differ on a wide range of characteristics and lead very diverse lifestyles. Second, definitions of the migrant worker vary across agencies and programs. Third, the definition of what constitutes agricultural work also varies and may or may not include dairy and livestock work, fishing, packaging, lumber, canning, or transportation. As a result, demographics on migrant families are dependent on the specific criteria used in each program or survey.

One source of data, the Department of Agriculture's Hired Farm Worker Force (HFWF) Survey, portrays farm workers as mostly white teenagers (Martin and Holt, 1987). This contrasts sharply with the more recent National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) which characterizes farm workers as adult, 71 percent Hispanic, and 62 percent foreign-born (Mines et al., 1990). The NAWS is considered by some to be the best data available on migrant families but disadvantages to the survey are that it does not distinguish between migrants and non-migrants nor does it include workers in livestock or farm service. Despite its drawbacks, most current studies concur with NAWS and find that the majority of migrant farm workers are Hispanic and foreign-born. One source characterizes the migrant population to be as much as 95 percent immigrants and 90 percent Hispanic (Trotter, 1992). The majority of sources report that migrant workers are U.S. citizens or legal residents (Diaz et al., 1989; Trotter, 1992).

Another factor that contributes to the difficulty in obtaining accurate migrant demographics is the lack of a national agency that has responsibility for the collection of migrant statistics. As a result, there is great disparity in the literature as to the number of migrant workers in the country. In 1989, estimates of the number of migrant farm workers varied from 317,000 to 5 million (Diaz et al., 1989; Shotland, 1989). In 1992, estimates of those engaged in migrant labor ranged from 1.7 million to 6 million (Trotter, 1992).

[2,3]The law in effect at the time of these case studies has been superseded by P.L. 103-382, effective July 1, 1995. PL 103-382 also has a set-aside for prison populations, Section 1202(a)(2). This new law has revised the definitions of migrant students such that there is no distinction between current and former migrant students, and eligibility is based on a move within the last 36 months. See Section 1309(2) of P.L. 103-382.

For the children of migrant workers, there was the Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS), a national computerized database maintained in Little Rock, Arkansas, that tracked academic and health records for migrant students.[4] According to the MSRTS, in 1990 there were approximately 600,000 MEP students in school districts across the country (Strang et al., 1993). This number, however, is dependent upon outreach and recruitment efforts by the MEP and is likely to be an under-representation of the actual number of migrant students in the country. During the 1989-90 school year, approximately 74 percent of students enrolled in the MEP were Hispanic, 20 percent were non-Hispanic White, three percent were African-American, and three percent were other ethnic groups (Henderson et al., 1992). During the 1989-90 summer term, the proportion of Hispanic students in the MEP increased to 84 percent (Henderson et al., 1992). According to the 1992 MSRTS, approximately 65 percent of students listed were born in the United States and 30 percent were born in Mexico.

Migrant workers are among the most poorly paid workers in the country — in 1986, the annual income for migrant workers was less than $6500 (Shotland, 1989). About 84 percent of MEP students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunches through the National School Lunch Program, compared with slightly more than 30 percent of students nationally (Cox et al., 1992). In addition to poverty, migrant families face many other hardships, such as limited health care, poor nutrition, and inadequate housing conditions. These problems are intensified for migrant families because of their frequent moves, language barriers, long work hours, and isolation and prejudice in the community. Given the enormous stresses on migrant families, it is not surprising that the level of child abuse among migrant families is reportedly much higher than in the general population (Lawless, 1986).

Federal Programs for Migrant Families

Migrant families have historically been ineligible for social services and public assistance because in most states these services require a six-month residency. Since the 1960s, however, the federal government has recognized the special needs of migrant families and designed a variety of programs for the migrant population. Regulations and appropriations were passed for a number of migrant services, including health care, education, housing, day care, job training, and sanitation programs.

The three primary federal programs developed specifically for migrant families are the Migrant Health Program, the Title I Migrant Education Program, and Migrant Head Start. Other federal programs currently (in the 1994-95 school year) serving migrant children include: the Seasonal Farm Worker Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA); the High School Equivalency Program (HEP); the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP); and the Migrant Even Start Program, which is the subject of this report.

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[4]The Migrant Student Record Transfer System was discontinued in the spring of 1995.

The Migrant Health Program

In 1962, Congress passed the Migrant Health Act, the first federal program to provide services for the migrant population. The Migrant Health Program was designed in response to the overwhelming health risks and health-related conditions of migrant families, resulting from exposure to toxic pesticides, harsh and sometimes dangerous physical labor, and injury from farm machinery and equipment. One study of migrant families in Wisconsin indicated that migrant families have significantly greater risks of health problems and early mortality than the general population (Slesinger et al., 1986).

The Migrant Health Act provides funding for more than 100 special migrant health centers to serve the needs of the migrant farm workers and their families. These centers serve approximately 500,000 migrant and seasonal farm workers annually and offer a wide range of services, including: primary prevention, episodic and chronic medical care, health education, emergency care, family planning, obstetrics, hospitalization, pharmacy, dental care, emergency food, transportation, and counseling. Eligibility is extended to migrant farm worker families, both current and former (up to two years after the last move), but farm work is defined as crops only and does not include working with livestock.

The Migrant Education Program

Federal support for migrant education began in 1966 with amendments to the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that created the Migrant Education Program (MEP) as a component of Title I. The MEP, administered by the Office of Migrant Education (OME) within the U.S. Department of Education, was initially established to provide supplemental funding to state and local educational agencies to develop services to meet the special educational needs of migrant children ages three to 21.[5]

Migrant Head Start

Head Start programs for migrant children and their families began in the early days of Head Start. As in regular Head Start programs, services offered by Migrant Head Start include early childhood education, nutrition education, health screening, parent involvement, and social services. Migrant Head Start programs differ from regular Head Start in that they serve children from birth to five years of age and offer full-day programs, whereas regular Head Start centers serve children ages three to five and operate primarily on a half-day basis. In 1992, Migrant Head Start was estimated to be serving 30,000 children in 41 states (National Commission on Migrant Education, 1992).

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[5]Specific functions of MEPs include: identification and recruitment of students; use of the MSRTS (which was discontinued in the spring of 1995); assessment of students' needs; designing program services; state coordination activities; parental involvement; and evaluation. These activities are integrated into existing educational programs within local school districts. The MEP offers services to current and former migrant students whose last move was within the past five years, but priority is given to current migrant students.

Migrant Even Start

The Migrant Even Start Program is one component of the Even Start Family Literacy Program initiated as Title I, Chapter 1, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as amended by the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988 (P.L. 100-297). In 1991, Congress passed the National Literacy Act (P.L. 102-73) which amended the Even Start program. According to the law, the Even Start program is intended to:

> ... improve the educational opportunities of the nation's children and adults by integrating early childhood education and adult education for parents into a unified program ... The program shall be implemented through cooperative projects that build on existing community resources to create a new range of services. (P.L. 100-297, Section 1051).[6]

To be eligible for Even Start, a family must have an adult who is eligible to participate in an adult education program under the Adult Education Act and have a child less than eight years of age who lives in a Title I elementary school attendance area. Even Start projects must provide participating families with an integrated program of early childhood education, adult basic skills training, and parenting education. The program's design is based on the notion that these components build on each other and that families need to receive all three services, not just one or two, in order to effect lasting change and improve children's school success. As a "family-focused" rather than a parent- or child-focused program, Even Start has three interrelated goals:

- to help parents become full partners in the education of their children;
- to assist children in reaching their full potential as learners; and
- to provide literacy training for their parents.

To achieve these goals, Even Start began as a demonstration program, administered by the U.S. Department of Education, that provided school districts with four-year discretionary grants for family literacy projects. In 1992, the program, while remaining a competitive discretionary grant program, was transferred to the states, although two small set-asides remain for direct Federal grants for migrant education projects and grants to Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

At the time of this study, in the fall of 1994, there were fourteen state Migrant Education Programs receiving direct federal grants to administer Even Start projects: Arizona, Arkansas,

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[6]The law in effect at the time of these case studies has been superseded by P.L. 103-382, effective July 1, 1995. PL 103-382 also has a set-aside for prison populations, Section 1202(a)(2). This new law has revised the definitions of migrant students such that there is no distinction between current and former migrant students, and eligibility is based on a move within the last 36 months. See Section 1309(2) of P.L. 103-382.

California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin. The Migrant Even Start projects are required to offer services in the three primary Even Start components (early childhood education, adult education, and parent education) but the structure of the project, the hours of operation, the length of time they serve families, and their service delivery are influenced by the special circumstances and needs of the migrant families. For example, because participants in many regular Even Start projects do not work, projects conduct most home visits and parent-child activities during the day. In contrast, in most migrant families both parents work during the day, so projects must offer services during the evening and weekends.

Migrant Even Start projects also are unique in that they work with a population that moves frequently and whose home base may or may not be where the project is located. If the project serves current migrant families, project activities are limited to the period of time when the families are living in the service area. Therefore, the projects operate on different schedules from most regular Even Start projects and may only be open for the four to six months that the migrant families are in the receiving site. To maintain consistency and provide service continuity, a few projects have developed multi-state collaboratives that offer Migrant Even Start services in both the home base and in the receiving states. Other projects encourage families to seek out other Even Start projects or similar services in the sites where they are moving so that they can continue working on their goals.

Study Design

In this section we describe the purpose and data collection methods of the study of Migrant Even Start projects.

Purpose of the Study

In March 1994, the Office of Policy and Planning in the U.S. Department of Education awarded a contract to Fu Associates, Ltd., and with a subcontract to Abt Associates Inc., to design and implement the Even Start Information System (ESIS). The study is a continuation of the four-year national evaluation of the Even Start Program that was completed by Abt Associates and RMC Research Corporation in 1994.

One of the tasks of the current Even Start evaluation is to conduct a special study of the Migrant Even Start Program. The main objectives of this study are to:

- increase knowledge of the Migrant Even Start projects;
- identify the unique program management issues that these projects face;
- describe effective practices used by migrant projects; and

- assess the appropriateness of the ESIS forms and procedures for the migrant projects.

The study design called for site visits to three Migrant Even Start projects to obtain information to address these goals.

Selection of Projects for the Study

The selection of sites was a multi-stage process. First, the Office of Migrant Education in the U.S. Department of Education identified nine projects for study. They sent the grant proposals, continuation grant applications, and any available evaluation reports from these projects to Fu Associates. Then research teams at Fu Associates and Abt Associates reviewed and compared the projects across a range of characteristics, including: geographic location, project organization, length of service period, number of project sites, and special features of the project. The goal was to choose three projects from different migrant streams that had interesting components and features. Based on this review, we narrowed the selection to four projects.

Finally, staff from Abt Associates called the project directors in each of the four projects in September 1994 to obtain updated information about the projects' operations, service delivery, staffing, and schedule. After receiving more information about the four projects, three projects were chosen: Pennsylvania to represent the eastern stream; Wisconsin to represent the central stream; and Arizona to represent the western stream.

Approach to On-Site Data Collection

Upon receiving approval from the Department of Education on the three sites selected, Abt staff contacted the project directors to arrange site visits. The visits needed to be scheduled before the farm work in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin came to a close and families in these states returned to their home bases. In fact, families from one of the Wisconsin sites had already started returning to their home base in Texas and there were only three weeks available from the time of our telephone call until the remaining families would be leaving.

The site visits to all three projects took place in October and November of 1994. The site visits were conducted by two-person teams comprised of one staff member each from Abt Associates and Fu Associates. The teams were on-site at each Migrant Even Start project for approximately two days to interview staff and observe project activities.

A topic list was developed that provided a comprehensive and useful structure for the site visit team to use in interviewing staff from the project and the collaborating community agencies. In addition to the topic list, field staff used a short observation guide that helped to focus the review of program components and provided a framework for observing project services. At the completion of the site visits, the observation guides were used to write brief

vignettes of the different project activities observed during the visit. The topic list and observation guide appear in Appendix A.

Organization of the Report

The remainder of this report presents information obtained during the site visits to the three Migrant Even Start projects. Chapters Two, Three, and Four contain the individual site visit reports for each project visited. A discussion of local evaluation activities and use of the ESIS appears in Chapter Five. Chapter Six examines the major challenges faced by Migrant Even Start projects and discusses a number of effective practices that are recommended by project staff or are currently being used by Even Start projects to address these issues. The final chapter provides a summary of the issues identified through our study of three Migrant Even Start projects and recommendations to support the Migrant Even Start Program.

Chapter Two

ARIZONA MIGRANT EVEN START PROJECT

Introduction

The Migrant Even Start project in Arizona is called "Primeros Pasos," meaning "First Steps." Located in Yuma, the project is administered by the Crane School District and operates year-round at one site, the Pueblo Elementary School, following the school district's calendar for winter and summer breaks. There are 11 Even Start staff, including a nurse, a van driver, and a secretary in addition to teachers in early childhood education, adult education, and parenting education.

The project targets families with four- and five-year-old children, but accepts a limited number of families with three-year-olds. Participation fluctuates over the course of the year, reflecting parents' work and migration cycles. Between 54 and 60 families are in the program throughout the year, with enrollment peaking from the end of October through early March. At the time of our visit, 26 families were in the program, of which seven families were returning for at least their second year. Over the life of the project, Primeros Pasos has served about 100 families.

Program Structure and Administration

The Migrant Even Start project is administered at the local level by the Crane School district, one of two districts in Yuma. The district also has a regular Even Start project, and the Migrant and regular Even Start projects split the salaries of three staff: the project coordinator; the nurse; and the home/school partner.

When the project first began four years ago, it offered only preschool services, and the early childhood teachers reported directly to the principal of the Pueblo Elementary School. Since then, the project has hired a project coordinator and has added adult education and parent education services. The project staff also has grown, and they now report to the coordinator, who in turn reports to the district's Title I/federal grants director. The coordinator of the Migrant Even Start project also maintains close communication with the migrant education staff at the state department of education.

The original classroom space occupied by the project was taken from the school by the district, which created some ill will between the building staff and the project staff. Although the school principal has since left the building (as have the original preschool teachers), there is still resentment among remaining faculty about not having had any opportunity to participate in a decision affecting their campus.

Characteristics of Community Served

Yuma, Arizona

Yuma is located 150 miles southwest of Phoenix, close to the California state line. It is also about 20 miles from San Luis Rio Colorado on the Mexican side of the border. Despite its modest size (about 55,000), Yuma has one-third of the state's 22,000 migrant population. The Crane School District is nearly 75 percent Hispanic, mostly Mexican and Mexican-American.

Migrant workers are drawn to Yuma by the vast farm lands, which include approximately 150,000 acres of lettuce and additional acreage planted with citrus fruit. Cotton is another crop that depends largely upon migrant labor. Major employers in the area include Sunkist and Dole, which operates one of the larger packing plants as well as a warehouse that manufactures boxes for shipment. In addition to harvesting crops, migrant workers also work in processing and packing plants. Much of the processing and preparation for shipping lettuce occurs in the fields, although lettuce shredding occurs in the plants. (McDonald's, for example, is a major consumer of pre-shredded lettuce, as are other large chain restaurants with salad bars). For migrant families with family members who remain year-round, other potential employers include a Super K-Mart store (the largest in the state), a Target store, and numerous restaurants.

The recently passed NAFTA trade agreement is expected to increase economic opportunities for the community because of its proximity to Mexico. One of the anticipated commercial corridors will run through (or nearby) Yuma, which residents hope will contribute to the economic growth the area is beginning to experience. Another boon to the local economy is seasonal; "snowbirds," or winter visitors from other states and Canada, flock to the area in large numbers during the winter months, and the city's population increases by approximately 40,000 between December and March.

Most migrant workers in Yuma live in apartments, rented homes, or mobile homes permanently positioned in migrant trailer parks. Migration is typically interstate, and many families travel between Yuma and Salinas, California or return to Mexico for part of the year. Some families travel back and forth to New York State. Migrant workers generally arrive in Yuma during the late summer or early fall and stay through March, although some workers stay for longer periods. In some cases, mothers and children stay in Yuma year-round while fathers seek work elsewhere.

The typical migrant work day is long — from 3:30 a.m. to about 7:00 p.m. Because of the intense heat during the summer months, when daytime temperatures easily can reach 100 degrees, migrants usually take a siesta about 2:00 p.m. to avoid the heat of the day. Work hours vary by crop. Lettuce, for example, bruises easily and must be transported to the warehouse soon after picking. Citrus crops are less easily bruised, and picking can extend into the evening hours. In the fall, when overnight temperatures drop close to freezing, lettuce picking begins in late morning, after the ice on the lettuce has melted. At the height of the season, an experienced picker can expect to earn up to $120 a day.

Project Demographics

The majority of project families (86 percent) are two-parent families. However, it is generally the mothers who participate in Even Start. The fathers are the primary wage earners, and it is not uncommon for fathers to leave the family for weeks or months at a time to work elsewhere (e.g., Heron, Mexico or Salinas, California). Many of the mothers work only during high demand periods when multiple crops are ready to be harvested. Eighty-four percent of participating parents were born in Mexico, but the majority are legal residents of the United States.

More than one-third of participating parents are between the ages of 30 and 40, although there are many mothers in their early twenties who have multiple children. Fifty-seven percent of the parents have only an elementary level education (i.e., through the sixth grade); 29 percent have been educated at the high school level, although in Mexico high school encompasses grades seven to nine only. Ninety-nine percent of the project's clients do not have a GED or high school equivalency and/or do not speak English. The typical family participating in Migrant Even Start resides in Yuma between nine and 12 months of the year. According to project staff, these families stay because they like the Yuma school system.

The project enrolls both current and former migrant families but enrollment priority is given to current migrant families. There also is a regular Even Start project in the Crane School District, and there is occasional confusion about eligibility for the two Even Start projects because migrant families also are eligible for the regular Even Start project.

Recruitment of Families

The eligibility requirements for the project include residence within a Title I school district, (in this case, the Crane School District), the presence of a child under age eight, the presence of an adult in need of adult education, and an adult's migrant farm worker status. In order for the family to continue its participation, a parent must participate in the adult education component and the target child must attend preschool.

Originally, children had to be four years old before September to attend the preschool. This earlier policy was revised because the project realized that it had turned away a sufficient number of eligible families whose children were a month or two shy of four. Now the project accepts younger children if they will be four before the end of September on the condition that a parent agrees to accompany them.

The project receives referrals from several sources, most commonly from the school district's migrant liaison or from school secretaries. In general, word of mouth seems to be the most effective strategy — often other migrant parents will inform project staff when new families move into the trailer parks. The project's van driver also watches for new families moving into the neighborhoods and unfamiliar children playing outdoors.

Once a family has been determined to be eligible for the project, the coordinator meets with the parent to compile a family history. Then the secretary/database staff member takes over, collecting more extensive intake information and serving as a hostess. Project staff commented that retention has not been an issue; once families begin to participate, they tend to stay involved as long as they live in the area and meet the eligibility criteria. There have been exceptions: one family withdrew, for example, after a husband ordered his wife not to attend any more classes.

Content and Delivery of Even Start Services

Overview of Program Activities

Most project activities take place at the Pueblo Elementary School campus, where Primeros Pasos occupies what used to be two large classrooms. One room is used for a preschool. The other room has been partitioned into two areas, one used for adult education classes and the other as the infant/toddler nursery and project office. The project relies on Even Start staff to provide the three core services. The adult education component consists primarily of English-as-a-second-language (ESL) classes taught by the project's adult education teacher and her assistant. Early childhood activities are provided through the project's early childhood education teacher and her assistant. Parent education occurs in the context of the early childhood education and adult education classes, as well as during some home visits, although home visits are used primarily for trouble-shooting rather than for regularly scheduled educational activities.

In addition to the core services, the project also has special activities for families. On Fridays, families sing songs that parents recall from their own childhood experiences. Potluck dinners are held monthly, usually in the evenings between 6:30 and 8:00 p.m. There also are periodic trips to parks and museums. At the end of the school year, the project holds a graduation ceremony and party for children and parents. At last year's ceremony, 250 people attended.

Adult Basic Education

The project offers two daytime ESL classes at the elementary school, a class for beginners in the morning and an intermediate level class in the afternoon. On-site child care is provided for participants' children in an adjacent room. The adult education curriculum is generally structured around meaningful life skills, including accessing different services within the community, using the library, saving money on electricity costs, banking, and current events.

In addition to the daytime classes, parents may attend a self-paced ESL class held in the evenings in a Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) computer lab at a nearby junior high school. The lab, in its second year, is offered by the school district and open to all parents in the district. The class operates from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., four evenings a week during the school

year. The JTPA computer lab opened in 1992 and, at that time, enrolled 68 junior high school students. The students gained an average of two and one-half grade levels in the first quarter; consequently, it was decided to extend the concept to adults. Last year, 110 adults went through the lab program; of these, about 25 were parents from the Migrant Even Start project. Twelve students have registered so far this quarter but a larger turnout is expected, despite the fact that, due to lack of funding, the program is unable to continue offering on-site child care as it did the previous year.

Project staff do not encourage parents to take their General Education Development (GED) exams in Spanish because a Spanish language GED certificate carries little weight with local employers whose main concern is that employees can communicate with colleagues and customers in English. Consequently, students must work towards their GEDs in English. The JTPA computer lab, for example, provides a course of study for the GED that begins once competency in reading, writing, and conversational English has been demonstrated. Over the project's four years, the coordinator estimates that about five percent of parents in the project have obtained GED certificates.

An ESL/GED Class

An ESL/GED class is taking place from 6:00 to 9:00 at the JTPA computer lab in Crane Junior High School. The instructor is an ESL teacher employed by the two school districts in Yuma (Crane and District No. 1), who works for Migrant Even Start at night by overseeing the lab. In addition to the instructor, the lab is staffed by two aides. One aide is a young woman from a migrant background who is one credit away from completing her associate's degree.

The lab is equipped with hardware and software that is valued at $50,000. There are ten personal computers on which students run the U.S. Basics software, developed in Alexandria, VA, which has four levels of difficulty (easy, medium, difficult, and advanced) within each major subject area. The lab also includes GED software. Additionally, there are two tape recorders for listening to language tapes.

In the first 45 minutes of class, nine adult students arrived and immediately began working. It was obvious that all the individuals take their studying very seriously.

Early Childhood Education

The preschool operates four days a week, Tuesday through Friday, on-site at the elementary school. There are two sessions each day — a morning session from 8:15 to 11:45 a.m. and an afternoon session from 12:15 to 3:15 p.m. The setting is bilingual in English and Spanish and, although the preschool teacher speaks only English, there is a Spanish-speaking instructional aide. Classes are combined for four- and five-year-olds.

The preschool room can accommodate up to 25 children per session. At the time of our visit in mid-November, there were seven to ten children enrolled in the morning session and five to eight children enrolled in the afternoon session. At the peak of the season, there are about 17 children in the morning session and 15 in the afternoon session.

Instruction incorporates aspects of several related pedagogical approaches. One is the Independent Discovery and Practice (IDP) approach, which encourages children to "learn by doing" in various learning centers. The centers include animal observation for science, puzzles and block building, a playhouse area, space for creative arts (e.g., painting), a kitchen, the library with a small collection of children's literature, fine motor games, and outdoor play.

The curriculum also uses elements of High/Scope and K-Talk. However, according to the preschool teacher, the High/Scope curriculum does not concentrate enough on vocabulary development for this ESL population. K-Talk, a preschool curriculum developed in Phoenix, is a vocabulary-based system that fosters independent decision making by allowing the child to chose the activity he/she will pursue. K-Talk activities comprise 30 to 45 minutes during which the teacher works with rotating triads of children for five to ten minutes while the other children engage in activities at the learning centers. The triads are reconfigured each day, so that children of various abilities, personality styles, etc. are mixed. The teacher uses everyday objects and experiences to teach concepts such as hot/cold (e.g., examining a picture of a furnace and asking children to categorize it as hot or cold) and classification (e.g., differentiating among types of beans).

During the half-hour "circle time" activity, children convene as a group to work on the calendar, to review numbers, to recite the Pledge of Allegiance (in English and in Spanish), to participate in singing and dancing, and to listen to stories read aloud in Spanish.

Parent Education

Parenting themes are integrated within the daytime adult education classes held at the project, chiefly through the use of Parents As Teachers (PAT) concepts. Additionally, parents are required to accompany their children to the preschool center for parent-child time.

Parent-child time occurs for about 35 minutes in the preschool classroom and seems to be utilized mostly by those mothers who volunteer as servers in the school cafeteria. Parents are taught how to interact with their children in ways that will positively reinforce what the child is doing and further develop the child's language development and behavioral skills (e.g., "I see you're coloring with the red crayon.") Parents can spend time with their children at the various learning centers. For example, the Listening Center has a table where two parent-child pairs can sit while they listen through headphones to a book on tape and read along in hard cover books; a bell sounds to signal the turning of a page, which is intended to help children learn to follow directions.

According to the preschool teacher, "This program really pushes reading. We push to parents the importance of having books in the home." She also noted that there have been

instances when books from the class library have not been returned. When this has happened, she reports that staff have been reluctant to pursue the transgressions, because they believe it is important for the families to have books at home.

The project home/school partner takes activities prepared by teachers home to children who need extra help or to children who are unable to come in due to illness. However, this component occurs infrequently and the core services are primarily center-based.

Support Services

In addition to the services offered in early childhood education, parent education, and adult education, Primeros Pasos offers a variety of support services such as health care, transportation, day care, meals, case management, and advocacy, depending upon the needs of the participants and the resources available to project staff. According to several project and school district staff, the project nurse is a critical feature of the project's support services.

Health Care

Currently in her third year, the nurse divides her time between the regular Even Start and the Migrant Even Start projects, although her home base is at Primeros Pasos. Her work begins at intake, when she takes a medical history of each child entering the project and screens for vision and hearing. This year she also has begun to do cursory screenings of parents and to conduct skin-tests for tuberculosis because there have been several cases of TB in the area. Immunization records also are required at project enrollment. When there are gaps in the child's immunization record, the nurse administers the necessary shots on-site. Health records are maintained on each child through kindergarten, at which time they are turned over to the school. The nurse also makes home visits if there is a health problem or to follow up on reports of child abuse. Instances of child physical/sexual abuse are referred to the state's Child Protective Services.

The nurse also conducts monthly health presentations for project participants. Topics are determined by parents' information needs and interests. She has led discussions on such topics as childhood illnesses and environmental health (a significant issue for many field workers who spend time in pesticide-treated fields) and conducted demonstrations (e.g., how to use a thermometer). She also has clarified common misconceptions about various diseases (e.g., the Spanish names for measles and chicken pox are often used interchangeably by parents).

The mothers are usually the last in the family to get health care, occasionally because of their illegal immigration status, although the vast majority of project participants are legal residents. The children of migrants are eligible for state-funded health care through the Arizona Health Cost Containment System (AHCCS). AHCCS covers prenatal care for non-state residents, but it does not cover other health conditions for non-residents. One of the biggest complaints of the project staff is that there are no public health care providers for dental care.

There is one major local hospital in the area and one health clinic, the Valley Health Center, located in Somerton. Many families prefer to use the Valley Health Center in Somerton because many of its medical staff are bilingual. Unfortunately, it is accessible only to those families with transportation.

A Follow-up Home Visit

The van driver and the nurse arrive at the home of a 23-year-old Mexican mother and her three children. The husband is away, working in Heron, Mexico. He is an alcoholic and sends money home to his wife and children sporadically. The family lives in a multi-room, stationary mobile home. The interior of the home is ice-box cold and the only heat is from a floor heater. The living room is furnished with two couches, a large screen television, and some fold-up chairs. A separate kitchen and some bedrooms are in the back of the trailer.

The visit is prompted by signs of epilepsy in the middle child, the four-year-old daughter, who has been having episodes that suggest petit mal seizures. In addition, the child seems to be suffering from flu-like symptoms — swollen glands, loss of appetite, slight fever. The mother admits that she cannot read a thermometer nor is there one present in the house. Earlier in the week, the mother had made a doctor's appointment through the Arizona Health Cost Containment System (AHCCS) for her daughter. She was told, however, that the family no longer had AHCCS health coverage for the child. Through a series of questions, the mother explains that she went to the local AHCCS office to remove the family from food stamps because her husband had been working in Heron and was sending money home. The van driver serves as a translator between the mother and the nurse.

The van driver cradles the sick child on her lap and feels for swollen glands. The nurse has no medical equipment with her, and she asks the mother for a flashlight so she can examine the child's throat but there is no flashlight in the home. The nurse says that she will return later to examine the child more thoroughly. Her primary focus is on correcting the health insurance issue, and she begins calling the AHCCS toll-free number. The calls made by the nurse reveal that the mother had inadvertently checked all boxes on the state form, which resulted in her children being removed from AHCCS as well as from food stamps. The van driver and nurse confer about how they can get the child to a doctor — Valley Health Clinic being the likely alternative if AHCCS does not come through.

Transportation

The lack of public transportation is a problem for many families, although the state system will cover (pre-arranged) taxi service to transport sick children to doctor's appointments and the Even Start project offers transportation for families to transport their children to and

from the project. The preschool van makes two daily runs, one in late morning and one in the late afternoon, to transport children whose families do not have a vehicle or whose parents are working in the fields. Parents may also ride in the van.

Child Care

On-site child care for infants and toddlers is provided at the project, in an area set up with cribs adjacent to the secretary's work station. The project recently (1994-95) experienced a baby boom and there are currently 13 children younger than two years of age. In the previous three years, the program has had only one or two infants or toddlers. Child care staff include the project secretary as well as volunteer mothers who live in the neighborhood. The program also hires two high school seniors from the local Home Economics Related Opportunities (HERO) program to provide child care in the afternoons.

Other Support Services

Other support services offered by the project include meals and some snacks. The School Lunch Program provides breakfast and lunch for the children, and the project pays for afternoon snacks. Other snacks are sometimes donated by the local food bank. Parents are encouraged to eat with their children, and mothers who volunteer in the school cafeteria receive breakfast and/or lunch.

The project also organizes a clothing exchange. Parents can bring in garments their children have outgrown and swap them for clothing in appropriate sizes. There is also a clothing bank in the community called "School Bell," which provides clothing to school-aged children in need.

Staff

Project Staff

The project has 11 staff members, including a project coordinator, a nurse, a preschool teacher, an assistant preschool teacher, an adult education instructor, an adult education assistant, a home/school partner (currently on loan to the regular Even Start project), a van driver, a secretary, and two child care workers. All of the staff are bilingual in English and Spanish except for the preschool teacher, the nurse, and the adult education instructor.

The coordinator, who oversees both the Migrant Even Start project and the regular Even Start project, has two master's degrees, one in Education and one in Spanish. Before she assumed this position, the coordinator worked for ten years as a high school guidance counselor and has been involved with migrant education for nearly 15 years. The coordinator recently announced her resignation, and it is her understanding that her successor would continue to have oversight of both Even Start projects.

The staff nurse, who also divides her time between the two Even Start projects, has RN certification and worked in a hospital setting for 20 years.

Both of the classroom teachers have college degrees. The preschool teacher, who is in her second year with the project, has a bachelor's degree in elementary education, with a concentration in early childhood education. The adult education teacher has a bachelor's degree in the social sciences. The adult education assistant is a former migrant worker and her presence lends the staff additional credibility with participating families. The preschool instructional aide is a high school graduate and is currently working on her Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate.

In addition to providing transportation to families, the van driver also acts as a translator and serves as a vital link between the project and the community for recruitment and follow-up home visits.

At the time of our visit, the home/school partner was on temporary loan to the regular Even Start until the Primeros Pasos could obtain the funding to pay her salary.

All project staff are employed full-time by the project, and two-thirds have been with the project for at least two of its four years. The salaries of the project coordinator and nurse are split between the regular and the Migrant Even Start projects; the adult education instructional assistant is paid through the public library.

Staff Support Services

The project sets aside one day per week for staff planning and staff development. To accomplish this, the preschool is closed on Mondays. The mornings are used for staff development and training sessions as well as for joint lesson-planning between the early childhood and adult education teachers. Staff use the remainder of the day to follow up on children or adults who have missed several sessions; sometimes this entails making a home visit, particularly when the family does not have a telephone.

According to staff, each staff member receives an average of 100 hours per year in staff development or inservice training sessions, including conferences. At the beginning of the school year before participants arrive, the staff spend a full week on curriculum planning, scheduling, and staff development. Throughout the school year, staff participate in district inservice presentations, listen to guest speakers from the community, visit other programs (such as the Even Start "Family Tree" program in Mesa, Arizona), participate in joint training sessions with other local school districts, and attend sessions sponsored by the Arizona Department of Education.

During the 1993-94 school year, about 25 different inservice training sessions were offered, each lasting one to three hours. District-sponsored inservice training topics have included attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), CPR training, and an introduction to the district's computer lab facilities.

Last year, in collaboration with the local Private Industry Council, the project paid for National Center for Family Literacy trainers to come to Yuma and conduct trainings.

The project also arranged two staff field trips designed to enhance staff understanding of migrant families' backgrounds and experiences. The coordinator organized a three-hour stint in the lettuce fields to provide staff with first-hand experience of participants' actual working conditions. That brief experience has proven invaluable to staff and has helped them better understand the demands placed upon parents who often work 12-hour days in the fields and are then asked to attend evening classes or to accompany their children to the center. Another field trip consisted of visits to some Mexican schools in order to introduce American-trained staff to the educational system most participants had experienced. The school visits were particularly useful for the adult education teacher, who had been frustrated in her efforts to use cooperative learning strategies. Her exposure to the more traditional teaching methods employed in the Mexican schools provided her with a deeper appreciation of the students' previous educational experiences and expectations.

Coordination of Service Components

Coordination of project services is facilitated by the fact that all core services, except for the JTPA adult education computer lab, are provided on-site at the project. On a daily basis, project staff members interact with one another and with participants, and information is shared informally in the course of conversation and instruction. More deliberate coordination among staff occurs on Mondays, during weekly staff meetings, and during curriculum planning sessions.

Participation and Follow-up Strategies

Project staff report that maintaining participation in the project has not been a problem. The chief explanation is that the paucity of adult education, particularly ESL, services in the community creates a greater demand than there is supply. Having the van driver in the local communities four days a week also contributes to good participation rates, because the driver can talk with participants to learn about obstacles to participation.

The Arizona project has informal collaboration with an Even Start project in California. Staff members maintain contact with colleagues from the Salinas, California Even Start project regarding families who participate in both projects. This communication helps staff keep track of families who move between the two projects. Staff from Primeros Pasos developed a helpful checklist of important documents (e.g., immunization records, social security cards, school records, and citizenship and birth records) for families who travel between sites. The checklist is printed on a manila envelope so families can keep all of these papers in one place. The Even Start project in Salinas also has adapted the checklist for use in all of its projects.

Evaluation and ESIS (Even Start Information System)

The project has used the services of an external evaluator, based in Virginia, to conduct a local evaluation. The evaluator produces an annual report that incorporates data from the ESIS and data from the earlier national data collection system, the NEIS, as well as data from on-site interviews and observations. In the first year, the local evaluation helped the project staff revise its operations. The local evaluation report for the second year provided feedback about refinements and indicated that the project had made improvements in weak areas. The third-year report included longitudinal data that the evaluator was able to collect by contacting nearly all of the families (93 of 96), to find out where families were living, whether families were participating in other educational programs, and how children were doing in school.

Both the project coordinator and the secretary (who is responsible for most of the data entry) commented that the current data collection system, the ESIS, is easier to use than its predecessor, the NEIS. The coordinator also felt that, although the system is clearly not designed for migrant populations, it is a useful system and the staff did not have any difficulty using it. The coordinator mentioned that the project continues to use the NEIS Form 1B (Family Information) even though the federal evaluation no longer requires its completion, because it contains useful information for the project.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

Perceived Impact on Families

Project staff believe that Primeros Pasos helps families in several ways: through the provision of education to adults and children, especially parenting education; through increased access to other services in the community, primarily health services; and by helping families realize the importance of stability for young children. Additionally, the project helps raise parents' expectations about their children. More parents now believe that their children will complete at least high school and some indicate that their children will go on to college. Staff also feel that teachers in the local districts are beginning to see positive differences in the school readiness of children who have participated in Even Start and other preschool programs. It is not only teachers who are reporting positive outcomes from project participation, but other school personnel as well. School administrators report project parents are assuming greater responsibility (e.g., calling in to inform the school when children are sick), school attendance has improved, and more parents are attending parent-teacher conferences.

Project staff also report that one of the things they have emphasized to families is the importance of keeping children in the same school for the entire year, and they have observed that more families are following that advice. Mothers are remaining in one location with the children while fathers leave in search of seasonal work outside of the community.

Program Features Important to the Project's Success

Staff members report that the communication among project staff is an important factor contributing to the project's success. They feel that project staff are comfortable with one another, ideas are easily shared, and there is time set aside for staff to plan together, to work collaboratively, and to relax together.

The coordinator, who has been active in local human services for nearly 20 years, is a key figure in establishing connections between the project and community social service agencies. Her connections also extend to the state level, where she has known and worked with other migrant educators for many years. Her departure will undoubtedly have an impact on the project.

Challenges Faced by the Project

Managing different funding streams has taken a considerable amount of energy from the project. In the 1994 program year, there were problems with carry-over funds and overall funding for the regular Even Start project which led to funding problems and the Primeros Pasos project had to cut nearly 15 percent from its operating budget in order to cover staff salaries that had been paid in part with regular Even Start funds.

There also are a number of problems and challenges that staff believe are more common in the migrant population than in other groups. These include: convincing parents to accompany children to the preschool center (this is much less difficult in regular Even Start); the isolation of the mothers; the children's lack of previous educational experiences; helping parents realize that health issues are worth attention before illnesses reach crisis levels; the lack of health (and other) materials available in Spanish and at appropriate reading levels; and the low levels of education among migrant parents. Another challenge in dealing with migrant families is to continue the linkages with other states, providing and receiving referrals to other migrant programs. It is important for programs to know in advance that families are coming and for families to know in advance how to get in touch with other programs in other cities.

Future plans for project staff include developing linkages with Migrant Head Start, as well as with regular Head Start, so that Head Start parents can attend Migrant Even Start adult education classes. In return, Head Start would cover the cost of additional instructional materials, such as the Oxford Picture Dictionaries and occasional snacks or beverages. The nurse is currently working on cultivating relationships with health care providers, and the project is interested in developing a better relationship with the Valley Heath Center. The staff also would like to reduce the regular school faculty's resistance to having parents in the classroom as volunteers or as observers. This is not just a challenge for the program but for the district as a whole.

Chapter Three

PENNSYLVANIA MIGRANT EVEN START PROJECT

Introduction

Pennsylvania has nine million acres of farmland and the largest rural population in the United States (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 1993). The state's largest industry is agriculture and each year between 4,000 and 5,000 interstate migrant and seasonal farmworkers come into central and northeastern Pennsylvania seeking employment in agriculture and agri-related businesses. Their work includes fruit and vegetable farming, tree farming, fishing, horticulture, dairy, poultry, and food processing industries. The majority of Pennsylvania's migrant families follow the eastern migrant stream and have home bases in Florida, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the southeastern and south central United States. Eighty-four percent of the state's migrant workers are Hispanic, ten percent are white, and the remainder are other minorities, including African-American, Haitian, and Asian/Pacific Islander.

The Migrant Even Start project, which began in 1991, provides services to approximately 85 families who migrate to two counties in southern Pennsylvania. Even Start project staff include a project coordinator, a site coordinator, ten parent educators, and six child care workers. Adult education classes are offered both days and evenings from a number of community agencies. To match parents' work schedules and child care needs, early childhood education is offered during the day while parents work and at night while parents attend classes. Parent educators conduct weekly home visits, often at night or on the weekend, focused on parent-child activities.

Program Structure and Administration

The Pennsylvania Migrant Education Program (MEP) provides services to 8,000 migrant students in 46 counties in the state. The program is implemented through five local operating agencies, of which the Lincoln Intermediate Unit No. 12 Migrant Child Development Program (LIUMCDP) serves the largest geographic area. The LIUMCDP is one component of the Lincoln Intermediate Unit No. 12 (LIU), an intermediate educational agency functioning between the state and county levels, and is funded through federal and state monies and provides supplemental education for children of migrant farmworkers in 31 counties in central Pennsylvania. The agency's purpose, as stated in their brochure, is "to ensure that all enrolled migrant students receive educational services necessary to develop to their fullest potential in order that they become productive and participating members of our society."

The LIUMCDP's numerous services include early childhood education programs, group/family day care, summer school, intervention services for public school students, career education/work experience, health and nutrition services, after-school programs, adult education,

parent education, and parent involvement programs. The LIUMCDP also coordinates migrant day care services for 31 counties in the state.

Across all of its programs, the LIUMCDP serves more than 1600 migrant students from infancy through age 21. The state divides migrant students into three categories according to the families' movement pattern: (1) interstate migrants who move from state to state for work; (2) intrastate migrants who move within the state for work; and (3) formerly migrant families who stopped migrating within the last six years. According to LIUMCDP program statistics for the year 1993, 40 percent of migrant students served by the program were interstate migrants, four percent were intrastate migrants, and 56 percent were from formerly migrant families. These figures closely match state statistics for student migratory status.

The LIUMCDP, under contract to the state migrant education program, administers the Migrant Even Start project that currently serves 85 migrant families from Adams County and Franklin County, two adjacent counties in south central Pennsylvania. The project is co-located with LIUMCDP's field office in downtown Gettysburg in Adams County. The building contains office space, meeting room space, and an area that is used for child care. The Even Start project also has a satellite office co-located with the LIU's adult education program in Franklin County. The project's staff are employed year-round but the majority of services and activities take place from May through October, when the migrant families are working full-time.

Overall project coordination is provided by the state director of Pennsylvania's migrant education program who is located in Harrisburg, approximately 40 miles north of Gettysburg. The state director is responsible for overseeing all migrant education activities in the state and also is involved in migrant education at the national level. He periodically attends Even Start meetings and is very supportive of the Migrant Even Start project but has limited involvement in the project's daily operations.

General supervision and project guidance is provided by the LIUMCDP director, whose office is located in the same building as the Migrant Even Start project in Gettysburg. The director estimates that he spends about five hours a week in project-related activities, such as attending meetings with staff from Even Start and community agencies.

The project coordinator oversees day-to-day management of the project and supervises the staff of ten parent educators and six child care workers. A site coordinator for the Franklin County project manages the staff and project activities at that location and reports to the project coordinator in Gettysburg.

Characteristics of the Communities Served

Adams and Franklin counties are located in the nation's fruit belt and are home to major growers of apples, cherries, and peaches, which are the primary employers for migrant workers. The area also contains some vegetable growers and poultry processing plants that hire migrant workers for temporary or seasonal employment. Poultry workers are eligible for migrant education services because this type of employment is usually short-term and seasonal. Year-

round employment is available in the poultry processing plants but most migrant workers do not work in this industry for long periods of time.

Adams County has a population of about 60,000 to 70,000. It is the largest fruit processing county in Pennsylvania and in the nation. Currently, there are over 150 growers in the county. Over 90 percent of the migrant families in Adams County are Hispanic; mostly Mexican, Mexican-American, or Puerto Rican; and the majority speak only Spanish. There are currently 483 migrant students registered in the MEP in Adams County.

Franklin County is more urban and has a population of 121,000. In contrast to Adams County, the migrant population in Franklin County is 70 percent African-American and Haitian. The remaining 30 percent of migrant families are mostly Hispanic and white, but the number of Hispanic workers coming into the area is increasing. There are currently 187 migrant students registered in the MEP in Franklin County.

In both counties, migrant work usually begins in the late winter with tree pruning and ends with the fruit harvest in the late fall. The number of hours that migrants work each day depends on the type of crop they are harvesting. For example, peaches and cherries spoil easily so these workers usually end their workday at 5:00 p.m. when the storage facilities close. Apples, however, keep well and these pickers often work until dusk. At the height of the season, pickers can earn an average of $7.50 an hour.

Of the 85 Migrant Even Start families currently enrolled, 80 percent are from Adams County and 20 percent are from Franklin County. Families are scattered throughout both counties, living in migrant housing camps as well as apartments, rental homes, and inexpensive motel rooms. About 70 percent of the families are two-parent families and the remaining 30 percent are single-parent households. Staff report that most participating adults did not complete high school and that the average level of education is the fourth grade.

Although the number of Hispanic migrant families in the area is increasing, the migrant workers are only a small segment of the area's population. Project staff describe the population in the area as predominantly white and conservative, mostly of Pennsylvania Dutch and German ancestry. Currently, the staff report that there are not many discrimination problems but they expect that this may change as more Hispanic families move into the area. To help educate the community, the Migrant Even Start coordinator gives presentations on the migrant culture to students and teachers in the public schools.

Recruitment of Families

In order to be eligible for the Migrant Even Start project, families must reside in Adams or Franklin counties, have a child less than eight years old, and have one parent who is eligible for adult basic education or is limited English proficient (LEP).

The three recruiters for the LIUMCDP Title I migrant education program who are responsible for recruiting children for the MEP also identify families who are eligible for the

Migrant Even Start project. Once a child is determined to be eligible for migrant education services, the recruiters conduct a family needs assessment, make necessary referrals (e.g., health screenings, adult education), and screen for eligibility for the Migrant Even Start project. A screening form is completed for all families determined eligible for Migrant Even Start services and these forms are given to the Even Start project coordinator. The Even Start parent educators then conduct home visits to all eligible families and recruit those who are interested. The initial project recruitment took place in October of 1991.

The MEP recruiters work mostly during the busy labor season, April through November, and have flexible hours, often working evenings and weekends. Several of these recruiters also work part-time as parent educators in the Migrant Even Start project. Recruitment techniques used to identify children eligible for migrant education include visiting migrant housing camps; sharing information by word of mouth; networking with community agencies; distributing flyers and leaflets; meeting with families; and talking with employers, school districts, and local business people that cater to migrant families. Staff feel that all of the techniques work together for successful recruitment.

Content and Delivery of Even Start Services

Overview of Program Activities

The project offers a variety of services in the three Even Start core components. Early childhood education is provided by the Migrant Child Development Center, Head Start and Migrant Head Start, Title XX day care centers, migrant summer school, and the public schools. In addition, the project provides evening child care while parents are attending adult education classes. Adult education services, mostly English-as-a-second-language (ESL) classes, are available days and evenings through the LIU adult education program, the Center for Human Services, and Catholic Charities. ESL services and tutoring also are provided by parent educators and volunteers to participants who are not ready or able to attend ESL group instruction. Parent education is provided by Even Start staff during home visits and group activities.

In addition to the activities offered in the three core components, the project also provides advocacy services for families and holds monthly group activities, such as field trips, parties, community speakers, and parent-child activities. During the summer, the project operates a small summer program for migrant parents who stay in the area but who are not working full-time. The summer program offers summer school for the children and parent education services for the adults.

Adult Basic Education

Adult education services in Adams County are provided in several locations by different service providers. One provider, the Center for Human Services (CHS), is an adult education agency located next door to the Migrant Even Start office in Gettysburg that offers ESL, adult

basic education (ABE), and classes for the General Education Development (GED) certificate in the evenings throughout the year. The building is divided into numerous small offices and classrooms where students and teachers can work individually and in small groups. On a typical night, there are six or seven teachers working with students. Migrant Even Start has a financial contract with the agency and pays a certain amount for migrant parents who do not meet CHS's eligibility criteria. The agency estimates that about 15 Migrant Even Start parents are currently enrolled in the classes, which also are open to other migrant workers in the community. The agency encourages parents to receive a GED in their native language before starting ESL classes. The rationale is that having a GED will facilitate the transition to ESL. Staff report that 26 Even Start parents have received their GED through the CHS (as of 1994).

An ESL Class

The two-hour ESL class, sponsored by Catholic Charities, is being held on a Monday evening in a church in a community north of Gettysburg. The three students in the class are Hispanic men in their twenties. Two of the three students participate in the Migrant Even Start project.

The instructor and students are sitting around a table in a small room with bookcases and a blackboard. The instructor has written a list of words on the blackboard that the class will be learning during the lesson and has distributed worksheets to the students. The first worksheet contains a picture of a family at a picnic and the names of all of the objects in the picture. The instructor asks the students to identify objects in the picture (e.g., what the man is wearing on his head). The students actively participate in the lesson and answer most questions correctly. As the lesson continues, the instructor's questions become more difficult and require more discrimination from the students (e.g., what the woman has in her right hand). A question about hair length prompts a brief discussion about the differences between what is considered to be short or long hair in the United States and in Mexico.

The second activity requires the students to construct simple sentences about the picture with the list of vocabulary words on the blackboard. As the students become comfortable with this task, they are asked to make sentences that describe what is going on in the worksheet picture. The students are engaged in the activity and seem very relaxed in the class.

Down the hall from the class, child care for two young boys is being provided by three Migrant Even Start child care workers, two of whom are teenage migrant students.

Catholic Charities also offers ESL classes in Adams County for Even Start participants who lack transportation into Gettysburg to attend classes at the CHS. These classes are offered twice a week for two hours a night and are open to all migrant families.

The LIUMCDP provides ESL and ABE services to project participants in both Adams and Franklin counties through the LIU adult education program and the literacy council. Two-hour classes are conducted twice a week at the LIUMCDP building in Franklin County, and tutors from the literacy council also are available to work individually with students. Fifteen Even Start participants are involved in LIU's adult education classes. The LIUMCDP also provides in-home ESL and literacy tutoring to participants who are reluctant to attend group services.

Seventeen students from Gettysburg College also provide ESL tutoring to Migrant Even Start parents in a program developed and organized by the Even Start project coordinator. The students provide ESL tutoring in participants' homes for two hours a week, for which the college students receive course credit. The students work in pairs; one student works with the children while the other works with the parent.

Early Childhood Education

The project provides several different types of early childhood education services, depending upon the county that the family lives in, their migrant status, the child's age, and the time of year. In addition, child care is provided during the evenings for children whose parents attend adult education classes, and activities for children are included in home visits conducted by parent educators.

One of the primary providers of early childhood education in Adams County is the LIUMCDP Opportunity Center, a non-profit early childhood program. The center serves 100 children ages three to five, with one class for each age group. Only currently migrant children are eligible for this program. The center is open 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from July until early November. Through a contract with a local bus company, the LIUMCDP provides transportation for all of the children attending the center.

The center's curriculum incorporates principles from Project PIAGET (Promoting Individual Adaptation Given Experiential Transforming), a national Title VII program developed by Pennsylvania State University and Bethlehem School District with funding from the U.S. Department of Education to serve limited-English-proficient (LEP) students. The program focuses on increasing English language communication and positive self-concept and promotes increased parent involvement and home/school communication. Three of the parent educators in Adams County work as assistant teachers/parent facilitators in the center and bring Project PIAGET activities into the homes of the children with whom they are working.

The center also developed an individualized program for five-year-olds called the Kindergarten Individualized Program (KIP). KIP combines small-group work and individual instruction, allowing children to have opportunities to work in small groups and one-to-one with the teacher on various activities to develop age-appropriate skills. The activities are divided into five developmental themes: numbers; fine motor skills; sequence, opposites, and rhyming; visual discrimination; and color and shapes. The students are allowed to choose the small-group activity that they want to work on during KIP time.

In Adams County, migrant and regular Head Start and other preschool and day care services also are available for migrant children who are too young for the Opportunity Center or who are not currently migratory. In Franklin County, early childhood education for the Migrant Even Start children is provided primarily through Migrant Head Start.

Parent Education

The project's parent educators focus on parenting skills and parent-child activities during home visits. They also offer parent education through workshops and community speakers at monthly project events.

A Home Visit in Adams County

The home visitor arrives at the home of a Migrant Even Start family at 5 p.m. on a Wednesday evening for a scheduled home visit. The parents live with their three children in an apartment in a two-family house. The parent educator spends her time working with the mother and five-year-old daughter on the living room floor. The father sits close by on a chair watching and listening but does not take an active role in the activities. The family's other two children play quietly in another room, occasionally coming into the living room to observe the activities.

The first activity is an alphabet game that consists of a long horizontal banner containing all of the letters of the alphabet and cardboard letters that match the letters on the banner. The banner is rolled out and the cardboard letters are scattered on the floor. The game requires the child to pick up the cardboard letters and match them to the letters on the banner. For the next activity, the parent educator takes out several magazines, a pair of children's scissors, paste, and large cards containing letters of the alphabet. The object of the activity is for the child to verbalize the appropriate letter, cut out an example from a magazine, and paste it onto the appropriate alphabet card. The third activity is a game in which the child identifies letters from a canister containing alphabet cereal.

The parent educator takes the lead in directing the activities but encourages the mother to participate and shows her how to help the child with the different tasks. Both mother and child are actively engaged in the activities. The letters are pronounced in English but most of the conversation during the visit takes place in Spanish. The home visit lasts about an hour and the parent educator leaves materials, magazines, and a children's book for the family.

During home visits, parent educators bring different activities that the parents and children can work on together, as well as books and toys that can be left at the home and picked up during another home visit. Each parent educator works with about eight project families and tries to visit each family once a week for an hour. Home visits may last longer than an hour, depending upon the family's needs. The three parent educators who also work as Project PIAGET parent facilitators at the Opportunity Center bring additional activities into the home that are connected to what the children are learning at the center.

Support Services

In addition to the services offered in early childhood education, parent education, and adult education, the project offers a variety of support services provided both by project staff and the LIUMCDP. These include child care, health care, advocacy, clothing, translation services, and emergency food.

The Franklin County site has a van that is used to transport families back and forth to the Even Start site and to other community appointments and classes. Due to the size of Adams County and the geographic dispersion of the families, transportation services at that site are limited to occasional field trips and rides to community appointments. LIUMCDP does, however, provide bus transportation to the children attending the Opportunity Center in Adams County.

Staff

The Migrant Even Start project staff include a project coordinator, the Franklin County site coordinator, ten parent educators, and six child care workers. Almost all project staff are Hispanic and all are bilingual. The project also has volunteers from the community and student volunteers from Gettysburg College.

There has been very little staff turnover within the LIUMCDP or the Migrant Even Start project. One parent educator has worked for the migrant education program for 18 years, and it is not uncommon for staff to have been with the LIUMCDP for 15 years. Since the Migrant Even Start project started four years ago, only one parent educator has left and only then to accept a promotion within the LIUMCDP.

Project Coordinator

Day-to-day management of the project and coordination of activities between the two sites is administered by the project coordinator. Based in Gettysburg, she is responsible for supervising all project staff, collaborating with community agencies, coordinating inservice training, overseeing project activities and special community events, coordinating the students from Gettysburg College, and monitoring project statistics and attendance records. In addition,

she often acts as a liaison with the migrant community and delivers numerous presentations to teachers in the public schools about the migrant culture and migrant children's educational needs.

The coordinator has a master's degree in bilingual education and is currently teaching Spanish at Gettysburg College. She also has experience teaching at the elementary and high school levels. Prior to becoming the Migrant Even Start coordinator two years ago, she had been teaching migrant students in the area's public schools.

Parent Educators

Of the ten parent educators, eight work in Adams County and two work in Franklin County conducting home visits and working with parents on parenting issues and parent-child activities. They describe their position as part educator and part social worker. In addition to home visits, the parent educators also provide advocacy services for families, such as attending school conferences, talking with teachers, and accompanying parents to community agencies. As noted earlier, three of the parent educators in Adams County also work as teachers' assistants/parent facilitators for Project PIAGET at the Opportunity Center.

The parent educators are part-time employees and are paid up to 35 hours a week throughout the year. However, to coincide with the migrants' work schedule, they work mostly evenings and weekends, putting in the most hours between April and November.

The parent educators are all bilingual and have varied backgrounds, with differing amounts of experience and education levels. Many of the parent educators are former migrant parents and have other part-time jobs, such as teaching Sunday school or working as teachers' aides. One of the parent educators had worked as a nurse in Mexico and is licensed as a CPR trainer. Another parent educator has a master's degree in teaching and curriculum and works part-time as the LIUMCDP assessment coordinator.

Staff Support

Project staff report that training is a priority and that they offer a variety of staff training activities on numerous topics and project services. Staff are involved in training sessions at least once a month and estimate that they each receive about 30 hours of training a year, both on-site and through outside conferences that the project pays for staff to attend. Training topics have included early childhood education, parenting, community social services, cultural sensitivity, first aid, and Migrant Even Start project issues. Program planning takes place during a pre-summer training and an annual retreat for key project staff held in late January.

Parent educators in Adams County meet once a month to discuss project issues, and individual supervision is provided as needed by the project coordinator. Franklin County parent educators meet as a group each week for staff meetings and have weekly individual supervision with the site coordinator. In addition, the Franklin County site coordinator meets at least monthly with the project coordinator for supervision and planning.

Coordination of Service Components

Within the Community

In addition to the LIUMCDP, there are numerous community service agencies in Adams and Franklin counties serving migrant families, including the public schools, Head Start, Migrant Head Start, adult education agencies, and Catholic Charities. The LIUMCDP has been very involved in networking with other community agencies and developed the Migrant Even Start Task Force which meets four hours every other month. Members of the task force include representatives from all agencies serving Migrant Even Start participants. The task force discusses service issues and communication related to the Migrant Even Start project. The LIUMCDP also sponsors an annual migrant agency meeting in Adams and Franklin counties. In addition to the Migrant Coalition, which meets monthly in Adams County, LIUMCDP staff also serve as representatives to local advisory committees, such as the Migrant Ministry, the Pennsylvania Farmworker Opportunities, and local boards and associations of agricultural employers.

The LIUMCDP, mostly through the efforts of the Migrant Even Start project coordinator, has established a relationship with Gettysburg College. In addition to student tutors, the college sponsors activities for Even Start families. Through a special grant, the college also is coordinating a five-day trip to Mexico for faculty, students, and a few LIUMCDP staff to learn more about the migrant culture and factors that prompt families to migrate.

Overall, the Migrant Even Start project has established very good working relationships with its collaborating agencies. The only agency with whom the project has had some difficulty is the Migrant Head Start program. The project has a contract with Migrant Head Start to provide parenting and early childhood education but Even Start project staff have not been happy with the quality of these services. One issue is that Head Start staff are not conducting the required home visits with families. The Migrant Head Start project also has had a high staff turnover rate and the Even Start staff feel that this has had a negative impact on their implementation of the PIAGET program. Staff stated it is their understanding that the legislation requires Migrant Even Start projects to coordinate with the Migrant Head Start agencies but that the Head Start programs do not have this requirement. Several attempts at negotiation have been tried but collaboration between the two programs has not been successful. According to the LIUMCDP director, the next step may be freezing some of the funds that the agency gives to Migrant Head Start.

Within the Sites

Within the sites, there is some integration across the project's core services, especially for the early childhood education and parenting components. This is especially true for children who are involved in Project PIAGET and receive home visits from parent educators who also are Project PIAGET assistant teachers/parent facilitators. Parent educators who are not involved in Project PIAGET make efforts to meet with the early childhood staff to coordinate home-based activities with the classroom curriculum.

The link between the adult education component and the parenting and early childhood components is limited except for families who work with parent educators on adult education issues during home visits.

Participation and Follow-up Strategies

Approximately 80 percent of families return each year to the project from their home base. Staff reported that 70 of the 85 families currently enrolled actively participated in the project last year. Families are required to participate in all three program components (early childhood education, adult education, and parent education) in order to continue receiving project services. Attendance records are kept for all project activities and records also are received from the collaborating adult education and early childhood programs. The project staff maintain this information in a file for each participant.

In terms of follow-up, the project had hoped to establish a relationship with the Florida Migrant Even Start project to coordinate services for project families who return to a home base in Florida but so far this has not been successful. Staff from Pennsylvania were planning to meet with staff from Florida at the recent Even Start regional technical assistance conference in Washington, but the Florida project was not represented at the meeting. The only current follow-up strategy that staff are using is to encourage families who return to Florida to ask around in the community for the Migrant Even Start project.

Evaluation and ESIS (Even Start Information System)

The project has not had an independent evaluator until the summer of 1994, so local evaluation activities have been limited. The local evaluator set up a database (in late 1994) in collaboration with staff at the state migrant education office. A research associate at the state works closely with the state migrant education director and is responsible for conducting evaluation activities related to the migrant education program, coordinating the Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS) at the state level, providing technical assistance for data management to the project, and monitoring project statistics.[7] Project staff are currently (in the fall of 1994) in the process of brainstorming to develop a needs assessment instrument to determine the specific content areas where families need help so that they may tailor project curricula accordingly.

Staff felt that the adult assessments used in the past national evaluation, such as the CASAS and the TABE, were not appropriate for the migrant population. They report that the assessments did not adequately measure migrant students' abilities and often did not reflect change, when in fact students might have made tremendous progress in their English skills. They recommend that staff from all of the migrant projects be brought together to discuss assessment issues specific to the migrant population.

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[7]The Migrant Student Record Transfer System was discontinued in the Spring of 1995.

The Even Start project coordinator also has concerns about schedule of data reporting for the national evaluation because the July 1 submission date falls in the middle of their program year. In addition, the forms do not allow for the variations in service delivery within the site (i.e., duration and frequency of activities) or for service interruptions due to frequent family moves.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

Perceived Impact on Families

Staff indicated that the project services are well received by the families. The parents really want their children to do well in school and therefore are very accepting of any help offered. Staff reported that one issue for migrant families is isolation from the rest of the community and that the project has had a large impact in this area. The project has encouraged parents to get involved in the community and in their childrens' schools, and staff cite increased attendance by migrant parents at school meetings and community activities. Staff believe that through involvement in their children's schools and community activities, parents are feeling more a part of the community. As a result, staff commented that the children realize that education is highly valued by their parents and are doing better in school.

The project, through presentations in the public schools, also has had an effect on the public school teachers and has helped them become more culturally and linguistically sensitive.

Program Features Most Important To Its Success

Most staff could not single out any one project feature, but rather indicated that the success of the project depended on the combination of services offered.

Several parent educators felt that migrant parents really liked the home visits and parenting education and that parents agreed to participate in the adult education services in order to receive home visits by parent educators. Another staff member stated that the monthly community activities held for the parents helped them feel like a part of the community and promoted cohesion and social interaction among the families.

Challenges Faced by the Project

A major challenge for the project is accommodating the migrant parents' work schedules. Many parents work very long hours; staff noted that 15-hour days are not uncommon at the height of the season. These work schedules make it very difficult for parent educators to conduct home visits and have the time necessary to connect with parents. The long work hours also limit the amount of time and energy that parents have available for evening adult education classes.

Child care also is a challenge. Parents sometimes must scramble to find child care for times such as late afternoon when most early education programs have ended for the day and other child care services are not available. For example, during the off-season after the Opportunity Center closes, Head Start is only available four days a week for a half-day program. This leaves migrant parents whose children attend Head Start needing child care arrangements during the afternoons.

Another challenge is recruiting Spanish-speaking staff for the project. The LIUMCDP director reports that the project could increase the number of families served if it could hire more Spanish-speaking parent educators. This scarcity of Spanish-speaking staff also is present in the public schools which have very few Hispanic teachers. Staff explained that Pennsylvania law mandates that public school teachers be United States citizens unless they have a temporary work visa. As a result, many Hispanic teachers are forced to choose between teaching and maintaining their citizenship in their country of origin, and the latter usually prevails. A related issue is the lack of Spanish materials and resources for parents. Staff report that they must translate almost all educational materials, which is a very time-consuming process.

Other challenges for project staff include a lack of appropriate space to work with families during home visits, necessary materials in the home, and transportation for families in Adams County. Staff report that the housing camps are usually very noisy and often there are extended family members or other distractions in the family's home. Another problem in the homes is the lack of resources because many families must pack and move so often. Parent educators must bring with them all of the materials that are needed for activities because they cannot rely on parents to have items such as magazines, scissors, or empty boxes. Parents in Adams County also have limited transportation options because most of the mothers do not drive.

According to staff, a final difficulty for the project is the limited training and support for migrant educational programs received from the U.S. Department of Education. Staff report that the migrant projects face different problems and issues than regular Even Start projects, and they would benefit from specific training, technical assistance, and an avenue for communication with other Migrant Even Start projects. Staff note as an example the lack of attention given to migrant education issues at the recent regional technical assistance conference held for Even Start projects. They also report frustration in not being able to talk and compare notes with other Migrant Even Start projects because the migrant projects all attend different regional meetings.

Chapter Four

WISCONSIN MIGRANT EVEN START PROJECT

Introduction

The Wisconsin Migrant Even Start project, called Project CORES (Connected, Organized, Responsive Family-Centered Education Services): *Para la Familia Migrante* (For the Migrant Family), is part of a multi-state collaboration designed to provide adult education, parent education, and early childhood education to migrant families from Texas who migrate to the receiving states of Wisconsin, Illinois, and Montana.

The project schedules in each state vary according to the migratory patterns of the families which depend upon the weather, the crops, and the work that is available in the receiving states. In general, the receiving sites provide services during the following periods: April through November in Wisconsin; April through October in Illinois; and May through July in Montana. The majority of services in Texas are provided October through March.

Currently, the project is serving 87 families from Texas who migrate during the spring and summer to five sites: Princeville, Illinois; Sidney and Glendive, Montana; and Cambria and Berlin, Wisconsin. This report provides an overview of services provided by the project in all of the sites with a focus on Cambria and Berlin, the two Migrant Even Start projects visited in Wisconsin.

Program Structure and Administration

The project is administered through the Migrant Education Unit of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction in collaboration with the state migrant education programs in Texas, Montana, and Illinois. The project was first discussed by representatives from each state at the National Migrant Education Conference held in 1992. All of the participating states expressed interest in a collaborative effort to provide Migrant Even Start services, and Wisconsin volunteered to be the fiscal agent and write the proposal. Project CORES was implemented in the spring of 1993.

The intent of the multi-state collaboration is to provide continuity of services to the families when they migrate from their home base in Texas to the receiving states. Site selection began by reviewing the Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS), a federal database that maintained information on migrant children, to identify sites in Texas that had the highest concentration of migrant children under eight years of age who migrate to Wisconsin, Illinois, and Montana.[8] Another concern was that the Texas sites be in close proximity to one another

[8]The Migrant Student Record Transfer System was discontinued in the spring of 1995.

in order to facilitate communication and service provision during the winter months. Based on these criteria, the communities of Del Rio and Eagle Pass, Texas were selected as the home base sites. The five receiving sites in Wisconsin, Montana, and Illinois were selected by the individual states based on the migratory patterns of the families.

The project has a director and coordinator who work in the project's central office in Madison, Wisconsin and are responsible for the overall management and operations of the project across all sites in the collaborating states. Each project site also has a local project coordinator who manages the day-to-day activities of the site, supervises the site staff, and handles many of the arrangements with local collaborating agencies and consultants providing services. In addition, each of the sites has a variety of staff, including home visitors/family educators, early childhood teachers, and consultants from community agencies who provide services to families.

In the original project design, it was proposed that one staff member would travel with the families from Texas to Montana, Illinois, and Wisconsin in order to facilitate communications between the receiving sites and the home base and provide continuity in services. Currently, the Montana coordinator/home implementor travels with families back and forth from Eagle Pass, Texas to Montana. The role of the project coordinator, based in Wisconsin, is to oversee operations in all project sites and coordinate all record-keeping and project documentation from her office in Madison. Staff report that this arrangement is working out well.

All of the site staff work for the project part-time and only during the months that the Even Start families are in their site, except for the Eagle Pass coordinator who travels to Montana and the central office staff in Madison who work part-time throughout the year. In December of each year, all of the project staff, the families, and the local evaluator come together in Texas for an end-of-the-year meeting and evaluation.

Characteristics of Community Served

Wisconsin has approximately 120 agricultural growers registered with the Bureau of Migrant Services who employ migrant workers. Cambria and Berlin, the two receiving sites in Wisconsin, are very small, rural, agricultural communities located north of Madison. In total, the two communities serve 40 Migrant Even Start families from Del Rio and Eagle Pass, Texas.

Cambria, located approximately 40 miles north of Madison, is a very small community with a population of 768. Approximately 150 migrant families arrive each spring to work for a large grower of green beans, corn, and peas. The families work in the food processing facility, processing and canning the vegetables. The 28 Migrant Even Start families, who work for this large grower, are housed in two migrant camps on his property. The upper camp has communal bathroom facilities and several one-story buildings divided into separate living quarters with one room and a kitchen for each family. The lower camp, located a short distance down the road, consists of three rows of trailers and an old house where the migrant crew leader and his family live.

Berlin, the larger of the two communities, has a population of 4,000 and is located approximately 70 miles north of Madison. Along with agriculture, the town also has a number of fur and leather processing plants and a downtown area filled with small businesses. The 12 Even Start families from Berlin all work for a major celery grower located several miles outside of town and live in a migrant housing camp owned and operated by the grower. Approximately 60 families live in this camp, which is considered one of the best in the state. It is located on the farm adjacent to both the grower's fields and the large processing plant and consists of several long, one-story buildings divided into two- and three-bedroom apartments with kitchens and bathrooms. The migrant families work in the fields planting and thinning the celery stalks and in the celery processing plant where the celery is washed, cut, and processed.

The Even Start families served by the project in Wisconsin are mostly Mexican or Mexican-American and many are members of families that have been migrating to the same community for generations, often with extended family members. The families are almost all two-parent families with an average of two to three children each; the majority maintain their home base in Texas. All of the families served by Even Start are currently migrating except for two families, one who stayed in Cambria to be near their older children who married and live there, and the other who settled out of the migrant cycle.

Most participants have not graduated from high school, and the average education level is at the sixth grade. About 90 percent of the Even Start parents are monolingual, speaking Spanish only. A higher percentage of the children speak English as a result of attending local schools.

In most families, both parents work long hours, often leaving the house early in the morning and returning late in the day, depending upon the type of work they are doing. Most migrant mothers spend their evenings cooking, washing, and caring for the children. Since parents are not available during the daytime, Even Start activities such as home visits and literacy classes also take place in the evenings. Almost all of the children are enrolled either in school, a summer school program, Migrant Head Start, or another structured child care setting and are usually gone from the camp during the day for most of the season. There are times, however, such as in the beginning or end of the season or before and after school, that parents must arrange for someone to watch their children.

Recruitment of Families

The families were initially recruited for the project in March of 1993 from the two home base communities in southwest Texas: Del Rio and Eagle Pass. The recruiters initially targeted 120 eligible families; 85 ultimately agreed to participate in the project. Of the original families enrolled in the project last year, 53 were from Eagle Pass and migrated to the receiving states as follows: 22 to Montana, 21 to Illinois, and ten to Wisconsin. Of the 32 families from Del Rio last year, 23 migrated to Wisconsin, seven to Illinois, and two to Montana. Currently, the project serves 87 Even Start families, about 90 percent from the group initially recruited last year.

The eligibility requirements for the project are the same as for regular Even Start: the family must live in a Title I school district, have a child who is less than eight years old, and have an adult family member in need of adult education. The only additional requirement is that the family must reside in Eagle Pass or Del Rio, Texas and migrate to one of the receiving sites. In order for the family to remain part of the project, they must participate in the home visits and one family member must attend adult education classes.

The techniques used to recruit families during the initial recruitment period in Texas included: working with school districts and community service agencies, hosting open houses and parent meetings, making presentations in the community and at interagency meetings, and word of mouth. Staff report that recruitment is ongoing and currently being done by home visitors in all of the sites. Some current methods used by staff include talking to other project families, talking to employers, visiting the migrant housing camps.

Once a family is recruited, the home visitor meets with the parents to identify strengths, needs, and goals and to develop a family action plan. When the family migrates, the family action plans and all family records are transferred from one site to another by the project's central office in Madison.

Content and Delivery of Even Start Services

Overview of Program Activities

Each project site in the collaborating states provides services in the three Even Start core components. The adult education services are primarily ESL and are provided by a combination of CORES staff, outside literacy agencies, and tutors. Early childhood activities are provided through Head Start and the Even Start home visitors. Parent education occurs during home visits and through interactive distance learning classes offered twice a year in the receiving sites.

Adult Basic Education

All of the sites offer adult education activities either through Migrant Even Start staff, community agency providers, or volunteer tutors. The Illinois Even Start site provides GED classes and uses tutors from Literacy Volunteers of America. In Montana, the project staff conduct the adult education classes using the Laubach materials and the CASAS. Project participants in the Texas Migrant Even Start sites have a variety of community classes available to them as well as computer labs, an educational van that holds classes, and home-based GED and ESL instruction by the home visitors. Efforts are currently underway to coordinate the instructional methods and materials used in the Texas adult educational programs with those used in the receiving sites.

Wisconsin Sites

The Wisconsin sites provide ESL classes through collaboration with Madison Area Technical College and Moraine Park Technical Institute. In Berlin, classes are held twice a week from 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. at a local elementary school. Earlier in the season, classes had started at 6:30 but staff felt that parents had to rush too much after work to make it on time, so they changed the starting time. The class is divided into a beginner group and an advanced group, although the instructor works with the students individually as well as in small groups. All of the students are learning English, and the instructor uses a variety of instructional methods, including Laubach workbooks and skillbooks for learning vocabulary and sentence structure. The instructor is planning to continue using the Laubach materials but wants to incorporate more pictures related to agriculture and more hands-on activities.

The instructor for the Berlin site has been teaching at the technical school since 1988. Previously, she had been a high school teacher. She does not have experience as an ESL teacher but was interested in the classes as a result of her experience learning English when she immigrated to this country from Latvia. The instructor does not speak Spanish and is sometimes helped in class by one of Even Start's bilingual aides.

The Berlin ESL classes are open to all of the migrant families in the area. At the beginning of the season, the instructor went to the migrant housing camp with the Even Start home visitor to recruit and interview parents. The home visitor also refers students to the instructor during the season.

The classes are attended regularly by nine students, three of whom are Migrant Even Start parents. The majority of the students are Spanish-speaking. Four or five students attend each class in equal numbers of males and females. There has been about a 50 percent drop in participation and attendance from last year when two teachers were needed for the 10 to 12 students who attended each class.

Staff report that there are several reasons for the drop in attendance from last year to this year. One reason is that last year classes were offered at the housing camp but due to space limitations had to be held at a local elementary school this year. Staff feel that because of the late hours that the parents work, it is difficult for them to rush home, eat, change clothes, and go into the community for classes. Another reason for the decrease in students is that the celery crop grew more rapidly this season (the fall of 1994) and, as a result, parents were busier and working as many as 12 hours a day. A third reason for the lower attendance rate is the overall decrease in the number of migrant workers at the Berlin site this year.

In Cambria, adult education classes are provided by an instructor from Madison area Technical College-Portage site. Classes are held twice a week from 6:30 until 9:00 p.m. at a local church. A total of 13 students are enrolled in the classes, with five to eight students attending regularly. The students are mostly women, and more than half of the students are Migrant Even Start parents. The instructor has a bachelor's degree in elementary education and has taught ESL classes to Hmong students. The classes focus mostly on ESL instruction but a

few students are working toward their GED certificates. The instructor also brings in laptop computers that the students are learning to use.

Staff report that parents are motivated to attend ESL classes in order to increase their English language skills which will increase their employment opportunities. Workers who speak English are more likely to be employed in higher paying positions in the factories and food processing plants.

Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education is provided in all of the project sites by a variety of sources such as local Head Start and Migrant Head Start programs, local migrant education programs, community day care and child care providers, and public libraries.

Wisconsin Sites

Early childhood education for the Migrant Even Start children in Cambria and Berlin are provided primarily through the United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS) which administers the Migrant Head Start and day care program.

Early childhood activities also are provided in Cambria by the Even Start home visitors/family educators during home visits and in Berlin by early childhood teachers while parents are attending adult education classes. Because attendance in the ESL classes was so poor this season in Berlin, the early childhood teacher did not have many children to work with and activities did not go as scheduled. By her estimation, she conducted early childhood activities only four or five times during the season. The early childhood teacher had intended to use the "Building Bridges" curriculum, geared to the three-year-old level, along with other materials for older children, but poor participation hampered her efforts. On evenings when there were not any children to work with, the early childhood teacher helped out in the ESL class.

Even Start staff provide early childhood services in the Cambria site for children whose parents attended the evening adult education classes. In addition, at the end of the evening, parents and children came together for a snack and short activity, known as PACT (parents and children together).

Parent Education

Parent education in the receiving sites consists primarily of activities conducted by the Even Start home visitors/family educators during home visits. The parent education component in the Texas sites includes home visits as well as a variety of group parent activities offered by the local school districts. These parenting seminars and training workshops are offered throughout the school year and are available to both migrant and non-migrant parents in the school districts. In addition, an intercultural community agency in Eagle Pass offers sessions

for parents on child development, discipline, learning, and life skills. Staff report that parents have more flexible schedules while in Texas because they are not working and have more time available for home visits and parent activities in the community. However, it was not clear from our discussions with staff whether, in fact, program participation was higher in Texas.

The Migrant Even Start project also provides two interactive television programs that are produced by an educational company in Arizona in collaboration with the project curriculum consultant and broadcast each summer in the receiving states. The plan was for families in the receiving sites to view the broadcast at the same time to allow for interaction among families and the studio presenter during the call-in times.

Although parents found the broadcasts useful, the logistics did not work out as well as planned and the broadcasts are being re-evaluated for next year. Staff felt that the programs are not cost effective because they require the rental or purchase of a satellite dish. In addition, the shows were shown on two Sunday afternoons and it was difficult for all parents in all sites to be available at the same time on these two days. For example, many families in Cambria missed both broadcasts; the first broadcast was shown before the families had arrived at the site for the season, and the second broadcast was not seen because the satellite used in the site was damaged. The Berlin families only had the opportunity to participate in one program because they had to work on the day of the second broadcast. Both sites were given tapes of the broadcast that they were encouraged to show to families.

Wisconsin Sites

The home visitors/family educators in Wisconsin try to visit each family at least every other week but staff report that the hours available to visit families are limited, usually 7:00 to 9:00 in the evening, Monday through Thursday. This also is the time when parents, especially mothers, are cooking, preparing for dinner, washing, or getting the children ready for bed. Bimonthly visits to families occur more often in Berlin, where there are only 12 Even Start families, than in Cambria where there are 28 families. Home visits in Cambria are more likely to occur every third week. In both sites, there are a few families who receive less frequent visits due to scheduling conflicts or family resistance.

During the time that the families are in Wisconsin, home visitors work on three or four different activity units. The majority of children are from three to seven years old, and the home visitor brings a variety of activities into the home for parents and children to do together such as reading, writing, matching letters, numbers and shapes, and various hands-on activities such as pasting and cutting out letters and numbers. Staff try to bring all the necessary materials with them for the parent-child activities (e.g., toys, glue, scissors, magazines) because they cannot count on the family having these household items due to their migrant lifestyle and tendency to travel light. Home visitors also carry a lending library with them so that they can leave books with the families. During the home visits, staff encourage parents to work with their children and try to engage both the parent and child in the activity. Most often it is the mother who participates in the parent-child activities. Staff stress that the most important point

is to have parents spend time teaching their children, in either English or Spanish, whichever language is most comfortable for them.

A Home Visit in Berlin, Wisconsin

The home visitor, accompanied by a bilingual aide, arrives at the home of a Migrant Even Start family at 7 p.m. for the scheduled home visit. The parents live with their nine-year-old son and four-year-old daughter in a small four-room apartment in the Berlin housing camp. Both parents work in the celery processing plant.

The mother opens the door with a surprised look and explains in Spanish that she had forgotten about the appointment. The aide translates and asks the mother if she would like to reschedule the visit. The mother decides to participate in the visit as scheduled and takes a few moments to cover the food she had been cooking on the stove. The father is not present during the visit but a television can be heard in another room.

The mother and children gather around the kitchen table with the home visitor and aide. From a big bag of books and materials that she brought to the visit, the home visitor selects a toy sound box that matches pictures with sounds. With the help of the aide and the mother, she tries to engage the four-year-old daughter in an activity that matches the pictures with the sounds. The little girl sits on her mother's lap and does not participate and seems shy in front of so many observers. After repeated attempts by the home visitor to engage the daughter in the activities, the son begins using the sound box. The home visitor later brings out some paints and shows the son how to create paintings that can be cut in half and then matched together.

After the observers leave, the home visitor tries again to involve the daughter in the activities. Through the window, the little girl is seen laughing as she plays with the sound box.

Support Services

In addition to the services offered in early childhood education, parent education, and adult education, all of the project sites offer a variety of support services (e.g., transportation, day care, health care, meals, and advocacy) depending upon the needs of the participants and the resources available to project staff.

The Wisconsin sites provide child care and translation and advocacy services for participating families. Child care is provided by UMOS during the day when parents are working and also is provided in the evenings during adult education classes and parenting activities by Even Start staff. Even Start staff who are bilingual also provide translation services to help families communicate with outside agency staff, such as school or hospital personnel.

Staff

State-Level Staff

The Migrant Even Start project director is the Chief of the Special Needs Section of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Her role includes overseeing the state migrant education program, the regular Even Start program, the Title I Basic Grant program, and a number of other Title I programs in the state. As director of the Migrant Even Start project, she has overall responsibility for project operations and fiscal matters and negotiates with other state directors involved in the collaboration.

Day-to-day management of the project and coordination of activities among the sites is handled by the project coordinator. The coordinator is based in Madison and works half-time on Migrant Even Start and half-time as the state Title I migrant recruiter, a position she has held for the past three years. She has worked with migrant families in Wisconsin for 15 years; as a child, she migrated with her family from Del Rio, Texas to various parts of the country. She has completed several years of college and, prior to becoming the Migrant Even Start project coordinator, she worked half-time as a Migrant Even Start home visitor in the Berlin site. She assumed her current position in July of 1994 after the previous coordinator left.

As project coordinator, she is responsible for the overall coordination of services at the seven project sites. Her tasks include coordinating services and communication with collaborating agencies; ensuring proper documentation and recordkeeping across all sites; maintaining project documentation and family action plans in the central office; coordinating the transfer of family and project records among the two sites in Texas and the five receiving sites; purchasing supplies; and training and supervising project staff. She maintains regular communication with project staff in all of the collaborating states and visits the Berlin and Cambria sites as needed for staff meetings and project activities.

The project also has a part-time curriculum consultant who is responsible for the interactive parent education broadcasts. Her duties include developing the content of the broadcasts, securing the presenters, and developing all of the supplementary materials. She also works with staff in the four states to coordinate curriculum activities and to collaborate on staff development, parent involvement, and parent training activities.

Staff at the Berlin Site

Project staff in Berlin include a site coordinator, a home visitor/family educator, an early childhood teacher, and a bilingual aide who works with the home visitor.

The Berlin site is administered by the school district. The Migrant Even Start site coordinator is a high school English teacher and has been the Title I migrant education summer coordinator for the past 22 years. As the site coordinator, he is responsible for site supplies, administration issues, and general supervision of staff. The project coordinator in Madison

handles most of the technical and programmatic issues and is available to the site staff for supervision when needed.

The home visitor has a bachelor's degree and four years of experience as an elementary school teacher. Currently, she provides family day care in her home and works eight hours a week for the Even Start project. She spends approximately five hours a week conducting home visits evenings and weekends at the Berlin housing camp and the remainder of her work hours preparing for the visits and the parent-child activities.

The bilingual aide works closely with the home visitor, who does not speak Spanish, accompanying her on all home visits and helping with all of the parent-child activities. The aide is a former migrant and has one-and-a-half years of experience working as a bus driver and assistant teacher at Head Start.

The site also has a part-time early childhood teacher who works with the children two evenings a week while the parents attend adult education classes. She has a bachelor's degree, taught elementary education for six years, and also worked as a teacher in the summer education program in Berlin. In addition to her part-time hours as the Even Start early childhood teacher, she is a family day care provider.

Staff at the Cambria Site

Project staff in Cambria include a site coordinator and two home visitors. The program is administered through the Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA), a local private, non-profit social service agency that also administers the regular Even Start project in Cambria. The coordinator has worked for CESA for three years, has a background in children's protective services, and is also the regular Even Start coordinator. She has a master's degree in social work and experience in human services.

One of the Cambria home visitors left the project recently and the project is recruiting a replacement to start next season. The remaining home visitor is bilingual and has a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She has four years of experience as a teacher's aide and also is the part-time Title I migrant recruiter. She grew up in the area, attended schools with migrant children, and worked for five years in a local food processing plant with many of the Migrant Even Start parents.

Staff Support Services

The project has offered a variety of staff training activities on numerous topics. In June of 1993, a four-day training was held in Wisconsin for the home visitors/family educators from all seven sites. The training included discussions of job responsibilities, client communication, using the computer network to communicate with staff in other states, the early childhood curriculum (Building Bridges), parent education, adult education, resources for children ages four to seven, and the project evaluation activities.

On-site training is usually held twice a year for half a day and has included sessions on self-esteem, parent-child activities in the home, adult education, the early childhood curriculum, and early childhood activities. Staff also are encouraged to attend staff development conferences and training offered by community agencies.

In addition, in December of 1993 at the end of the first year, all of the site staff and families were brought together for an end-of-the-year meeting and assessment. The two-day conference was held to review the first year and discuss plans for the following year and included training sessions on parent involvement in education and increasing students' self-esteem.

The project coordinator maintains regular communication with all of the site coordinators but distance prohibits close supervision of any but the site coordinators in Wisconsin. The site supervisors in each location are responsible for supervising home visitors/family educators, aides, and other Even Start staff. The state migrant directors of the collaborating states work closely with local site staff.

Coordination of Service Components

Among Project Sites

Early childhood and parent education components across the sites seem well coordinated, but the coordination of adult education services among the sites has been somewhat problematic. The original plan was to have Texas and the receiving sites use the same curriculum materials to provide participants continuity of instruction. However, this was difficult to implement across all seven sites. The goal for next year is to improve coordination in the adult education services among all of the project sites by increasing interstate monitoring and collaboration.

Within the Community

In addition to Migrant Even Start, there are other community agencies in Berlin and Cambria that serve migrant families. These include the United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS), which administers the migrant Head Start and day care programs; public health clinics; social service agencies; job services; migrant housing; local food pantries; and community adult education. However, none of these agencies comes to the migrant housing camps as frequently as the Even Start staff or provides the range of services offered by the Even Start project. Even Start staff coordinate services with these agencies whenever possible and are part of an interagency task force that meets regularly to address issues related to migrant families in the area.

The relationship between the Migrant Even Start project and most of its collaborating agencies in Wisconsin appears to be excellent. A contributing factor to the easy communication the agencies share is that most project staff work part-time for Migrant Even Start and part-time

for one of the collaborating agencies. For example, the Cambria home visitor also is the Title I migrant recruiter. The Berlin migrant education Title I coordinator also coordinates services for Migrant Even Start. Arrangements between Migrant Even Start and collaborating agencies in Berlin and Cambria are informal — there are no written contracts and the services are provided to project participants without cost.

The only agency that the project reports having difficulty coordinating services with, especially in Cambria, is the Head Start program administered by UMOS. The goal for the Wisconsin project staff had been to coordinate with the UMOS Head Start staff in order to enhance the early childhood activities in the classroom and expand on concepts being learned in the center during the home visits. Unfortunately, this collaboration is not as successful as Even Start staff had hoped. Staff report that Head Start staff provide child care during the adult education classes, but efforts have not been successful to coordinate curriculum and programming activities. In addition, Cambria staff feel that the Head Start staff work less intensively with the Even Start parents (e.g., do not conduct periodic home visits) because Head Start perceives that these families are already being served by Even Start.

Within the Site

Within the sites, there is some integration between the parent education and early childhood activities but less between the adult education and the other components. Home visitors try to use topics that have been used in the parent education component for their home-based early childhood activities.

Participation and Follow-up Strategies

The multi-state consortium is designed to facilitate continuity of services for all families. All seven project sites plan and provide services based on individualized family action plan for each participating family. The project coordinator receives the family action plans from project staff when the families leave a site at the end of the season and she ensures that the action plans and other family information are sent to the site where the family is headed before family arrives at the new site for services. The process appears to be working smoothly.

Project staff in Wisconsin estimate that about 75 percent of the families participating in the Migrant Even Start project in Wisconsin return each year to Berlin and Cambria. Services are offered to migrant families throughout the year either in the receiving states or the home base. The level of participation appears to be about the same within sites but some staff report that participation, especially in adult education, may be slightly higher in Texas when the parents are not working.

To remain in Even Start, the families must participate in the home visits and one adult must attend adult education classes. One strategy used this year to encourage participation in adult education in Cambria was to offer participants incentives for their attendance in class. This did not increase attendance as much as was hoped.

Even Start staff in Cambria and Berlin talk regularly with the adult education and early childhood teachers and day care providers working with Even Start families to keep track of participants' attendance in services. In addition, the site coordinators keep an account of attendance at all project activities. There are, however, several challenges for staff in following up with families who are not attending activities. One difficulty is that not all of the instructional staff are bilingual.

Evaluation and ESIS (Even Start Information System)

Local evaluation activities are conducted by an independent evaluator based in Colorado. The evaluator met with project staff several months after the project began in order to design data collection forms for the evaluation and other project reporting forms. Much of the data collected for the first year's evaluation were collected by site staff and assembled by the project coordinator. Additional data were obtained by the evaluator during the end-of-the-year meetings and evaluation sessions held in Texas in December of 1993 for all project staff and participants. The final evaluation report, published in April of 1994, contains a project description; statistics on the number of families and children served per site; and program accomplishments, including services provided in each site, as well as the results of parent interviews and focus groups conducted at the end-of-the-year project meeting.

The Even Start project coordinator has many concerns regarding the ESIS forms and the schedule of data reporting for the national evaluation. A major concern is the amount of time needed to collect the information from all seven project sites and to transfer the information onto the ESIS forms. Another concern is how to record all of the variations in service components provided within the different sites on the forms. In addition, the project operates year-round and July is not an appropriate time to report results and participation numbers since most families will be in the middle of receiving project services in the receiving states.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

Perceived Impact on Families

Staff report that the Migrant Even Start project has had many important effects on the lives of participating families, especially on the parents. One impact has been an increase in parents' involvement in their children's education. Staff report that migrant families have always been concerned about their children's education but the project has helped them to take a more active role. With staff encouragement, parents have increased their participation in school activities and have begun taking time to teach their children at home while doing household activities. Staff also report an increase in English-speaking skills among the parents and an increase in self-esteem among the parents who have learned English or become computer literate. Staff also feel that the project's early childhood services have helped children become better prepared for school.

Program Features Most Important to Its Success

The project director felt that the continuity of services that the project was able to provide by having a four-state collaboration was one of the most important features of the project. She reported that one of the main problems for most migrant families is the lack of continuity in services due to their constant movement. To prevent a breakdown in service provision, the multi-state collaboration deals with this issue by using one family action plan across sites. The director felt that the project has made progress in the past two years but they still have some work to do, especially in the area of synchronizing the adult education curricula across sites.

Staff reported that, overall, families are very accepting of all three components of the program, and recruiting families for the project has not been difficult. They could not single out one project service above the others that makes the project successful. Staff stated that most migrant parents are very concerned about their children's education and support the early childhood activities conducted in the home and during the structured day programs. Parents also appreciate the child care that the project provides for the children while the parents are working, and most parents appreciate the opportunity to learn English through the adult education services.

Staff indicated that the children seem to especially enjoy the early childhood and parent-child activities that occur during home visits. Staff told how children get so excited that sometimes they must bring extra supplies and materials for the non-Even Start children who also want to participate in the activities. The home visits also provide the Even Start parents with a role model for their interaction with their children — parents learn how to teach their children and interact in a positive manner by watching and learning from project staff.

Staff in Cambria feel that one of the most important features of their project is their relationship with the local library and the resources and time that the librarian makes available to the families. Staff reported that the librarian has contributed a great deal to the migrant families in Cambria. In addition to making the library a welcoming place for parents and children and providing space for Even Start activities, she also goes out to the housing camp to conduct a storytime activity and to bring books. Project staff and the librarian jointly purchased Spanish books which are displayed at the front of the library where they are easily accessible to families.

Cambria staff also noted that the space offered by a local church has been very important to the success of their project because space at the housing camp is so limited. The staff use the church for adult education classes, family programs, and storage for project materials.

Challenges Faced by the Project

There are numerous challenges faced by the Wisconsin Migrant Even Start project sites. The main challenges include: the limited time that the parents have available for Even Start activities in the receiving sites due to their work schedules; difficulty recruiting qualified bilingual staff; limited resource materials available in Spanish; the need for more child care and

supervision for the family's older children; limited space available for home visits and project activities; cultural barriers for parents; and limited community acceptance of migrant families.

Staff find that the limited time that migrant families have available is a major challenge in providing services. Often parents are working very long hours and their only free time is in the evening when they are tired after a long day. This is especially true for mothers who need this time to wash clothes, cook dinner, clean, and take care of the children. The long work hours also are a barrier for parents to attend adult education classes. Parents need a great deal of motivation in order to get home from the fields by 6:00 p.m. and take care of all that they need to do before attending classes at 6:30 or 7:00 p.m. in the community. Toward the end of the season, time is even more of a factor since the families have money and want to spend their free time shopping and enjoying other activities with their children.

Recruiting qualified bilingual project staff also is a challenge for the project. One difficulty is hiring seasonal and part-time staff who are willing to work the evenings and weekends that are necessary for most Even Start positions. A further complication is the need to hire bilingual staff who can adjust to this work schedule. One solution that has been successful in Berlin is to have a bilingual aide accompany the home visitor on all family contacts. Another solution has been to find bilingual staff who are already working part-time in other migrant service agencies.

Related to the difficulty in recruiting bilingual staff in Wisconsin is the lack of materials and resources in Spanish. One common theme across all of the project components is the effort to keep the Hispanic culture and language alive. Challenges for staff in this area are the lack of quality Spanish children's books and the lack of resource materials written in Spanish for parents. Community agency information, as well as all types of instructions and forms, have had to be translated for the project families.

Another serious concern for many migrant families is the lack of continuous child care. Neither the Head Start nor the day care program administered by UMOS runs throughout the season nor do they provide daytime supervision for children older than seven. The only service they offer for school-age migrant children is a three-week summer program. As a result, parents often must scramble to find appropriate child care for older children throughout the season and for younger children at the start and end of the season. Some options are for parents to work split-shifts, to share child care responsibilities with other mothers, or have an older sibling watch a group of children.

Space for large group activities is also an issue for both sites in Wisconsin. They have been able to use local community facilities for adult education classes and family activities but feel that attendance would be higher if they could use facilities at the migrant camp.

Some staff feel that there are cultural barriers inherent in Hispanic families that prevent them from making full use of the Even Start services, especially in the area of parent education and advocacy. One issue is the cultural norm that prohibits female visitors from being alone with a man when the wife is not present. A bigger challenge is the hesitancy of many Hispanic families to share personal information with strangers. This reluctance to disclose problems and

family issues is further complicated by the limited time that staff have available in Wisconsin to establish rapport with families.

The short time period they have to get to know the Even Start families, combined with the families' tendency toward privacy, can make it difficult for staff to establish a close working relationship with migrant families. Staff also feel that many parents prefer to receive some types of services (e.g., medical, social services) in Texas where they know the agencies and the providers better.

Another challenge for migrant families in Wisconsin is the lack of community acceptance. In Cambria, especially, staff report that the community does not welcome migrant families and feels that the migrants are taking money and jobs away from the community residents. Community attitude also is negatively influenced by some of the single migrant men age 16 to 25 who do cause problems in the community.

Wisconsin staff stressed that it is very important for the receiving sites to have reasonable expectations for the parents. They feel that because the parents are busy and have so little time during the work season, Even Start must provide whatever services that they can and act as a support system for parents. Some of the staff noted that the program is somewhat "like summer school" at the receiving sites; the receiving states provide the continuity in services that would be lost if Even Start was only available in the home base.

Goals for the Wisconsin sites next year include hiring more bilingual staff and obtaining space at the migrant camps to conduct adult education classes and large group activities for families. The project coordinator is planning to talk to the growers about the possibility of using an empty trailer or constructing a small facility in the housing camps. Staff feel that participation would increase if classes were held on-site and parents could walk to the facility or use it as a drop-in center. The sites also are considering decreasing home visits and increasing the number of large group activities in order to see more families at one time and give the families more exposure to the Migrant Even Start project staff.

Chapter Five

EVALUATING MIGRANT PROJECTS

This chapter begins with a review of the local evaluation activities taking place in the three Migrant Even Start projects profiled in this report. The second section contains a brief discussion of the concerns and questions expressed by these sites and other Migrant Even Start projects regarding the Even Start Information System (ESIS) that is being used to collect information for the national evaluation of the Even Start program.

Local Evaluation Activities

The Migrant Even Start projects in Wisconsin and Arizona employ independent evaluators to conduct local evaluations. Data collection activities include conducting interviews and focus groups with participants and project staff, observing projects activities, and collecting information about family demographics and project operations. The evaluators use the information collected to write an annual evaluation report. The annual evaluation report for the Arizona project also incorporates longitudinal data and information from the present and the past national evaluation systems, the Even Start Information System (ESIS) and the National Even Start Information System (NEIS) respectively.

The Pennsylvania project has not had an evaluator until the summer of 1994 so local evaluation activities have been limited. Currently, the local evaluator is collaborating with the state MEP research associate to develop a database for project information and statistics. The MEP research associate also monitors project statistics and provides technical assistance on data management to the project.

Appropriateness of the ESIS

In the summer of 1994, all Even Start projects gained experience with the ESIS by completing the two project-level forms about service delivery. Data on individual families and participants were just being collected during the time of our site visits in the fall of 1994.

Overall, staff from Migrant Even Start projects feel that the Even Start Information System is appropriate for use by migrant projects. Project staff did not express many concerns about the ESIS during our visit, but this might be due to the fact that they are just becoming familiar with the ESIS family-level forms.

A general concern expressed by several projects is how to record all of the variations in project services, such as intensity, when a particular site may be using multiple service providers for one component. For example, it is difficult to record information about the duration and

frequency of adult education classes when the classes are offered at different times and for different time periods by multiple service providers in the site. (This issue also is a dilemma for regular Even Start projects.)

Specific concerns for Migrant Even Start projects using the ESIS involve families who travel to multiple sites during the year and participate in more than one Even Start project. Migrant families participating in Even Start services are likely to relocate during the year. Depending upon where they move to, it is very possible that they could enroll in another Even Start project. This concern brings up two issues: coordinating information across sites for individual families, and obtaining an accurate count of total program participants when multiple projects are involved.

For multi-state projects such as Project CORES in Wisconsin, completing the ESIS for families served by more than one site creates an additional burden on staff. Projects must be sure that services provided to individual participants in each site are reflected on the appropriate ESIS form. In addition, descriptions of service delivery in each site must be merged into a single diskette to be sent to the evaluation contractor. This involves a great deal of communication and coordination of forms and records across sites to ensure complete and accurate project-level and participant-level data.

A larger issue involves the migrant projects that are not part of a multi-state consortium but are serving families participating in Even Start projects (both regular and migrant) in other locations. For example, participants receiving services from the Arizona project also receive services from the Salinas, California project when they return to their home base in Salinas. Although the two projects collaborate when possible (e.g., sharing files and information), each project maintains separate records and completes separate ESIS forms for their participants. This results in duplicate counts of project participants and inaccurate ESIS participation data. Due to the nature of the migrant lifestyle, this problem occurs in projects that are involved in joint collaboration as well as in projects that are not aware that their participants are receiving Even Start services in other sites.

A final concern for projects is the ESIS data collection schedule, which requires projects to report information on family characteristics and participation data as of June of each year. This is an issue for projects that serve families for 12 months of the year as well as for projects that operate for a limited time period (e.g., only during the months when the families are in the home base site or the receiving site). One issue is that the project may not be operational in July to participate in the data collection activities. This is true of sites whose families leave the area in the summer and return for the fall harvest. For other projects, the service delivery period is limited to spring through fall, and the July data submission occurs in the middle of this period. Another issue is that information such as current service participation and current employment status reflect the participant's status at the point of data reporting, in June, and this will vary according to whether the project serves families when they are working or when they are unemployed. For example, current employment data for participants who are working in June will contrast sharply with participants who are unemployed and back in their home base in June.

Some of these issues will require site-specific technical assistance by the evaluation contractors. However, other issues, such as double-counting migrant families across non-collaborating Even Start projects and employment status at one point in time, deserve additional consideration by the evaluation contractors and the Department of Education.

Chapter Six

CHALLENGES AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICES OF MIGRANT EVEN START PROJECTS

Introduction

In the previous chapters of this report, we described the specific challenges of each of the three Migrant Even Start projects visited and discussed their innovative and effective practices. In this chapter, we summarize the major challenges facing Migrant Even Start projects and identify common techniques and effective practices that are being implemented to address these challenges. Many of these practices are not unique to Migrant Even Start but also are utilized in and recommended for other programs serving migrant families (e.g., Stoops, 1980; Rudes and Willette, 1990; Pindus, 1992).

Challenges and Responses

In our discussions with project and community agency staff associated with the three Migrant Even Start projects highlighted in this report, we learned about a number of barriers that projects must overcome in order to address the special needs of migrant families. The major challenges confronting Migrant Even Start projects are:

- hiring qualified staff who are bilingual, bicultural, and knowledgeable about the migrant lifestyle;
- adapting service delivery to match families' work schedules;
- collaborating with other community agencies serving migrant families;
- providing continuity of services between the home base and receiving site;
- providing support services;
- dealing with isolation of families in the community; and
- finding materials written in Spanish.

In the following sections, we describe these issues in more detail.

Hiring Qualified Staff

A large percentage of migrant families are Hispanic and speak little or no English. As a result, one of the most common challenges for projects is to hire staff who are able to communicate with participants in their primary language. Hispanic migrant families also have certain beliefs and cultural practices that may not be prevalent in non-Hispanic or non-migrant families. It is important for projects to be aware of these norms. For example, in the Hispanic community it would not be proper for a young single woman to conduct home visits with fathers when the mothers are not home. This is particularly an issue at the start of a project before families are familiar with staff. Not respecting these cultural norms could disrupt the relationship between the family and the project and diminish the home visitor's effectiveness. Staff also must understand the migrant lifestyle and realize that activities involving food waste (e.g., gluing macaroni to paper to create art) may be offensive to migrant workers.

To facilitate communication with families and decrease cultural barriers that arise when staff are not familiar with certain cultural norms, projects try to hire staff who speak Spanish and are familiar with the Hispanic culture and migrant lifestyle. Often, this can be achieved by hiring former migrants. For many projects, however, it is difficult to hire qualified staff who meet these criteria. This is especially true in areas that do not have a large resident Hispanic community or do not have former migrant families who have settled out in the community.

Projects that are unable to find professional staff with the necessary characteristics often hire former migrants who can provide translations and work alongside home visitors and other project staff. All of the projects visited were able to hire at least one staff member who had previously experienced the migrant lifestyle. Projects also hire staff who work part-time for other migrant agencies. For example, in two of the projects that we visited, project staff worked part-time for both Even Start and the MEP. Projects also try to increase staff knowledge and awareness through training and education on issues related to the Hispanic culture and the migrant lifestyle.

Adapting Service Delivery to Match Families' Schedules

Many migrant projects work with families during the growing season when both parents work long hours and are available to participate in activities only during evenings and weekends. Projects in these communities have the challenge of accommodating to parents' unusual work schedules and competing with all of the other activities that families are trying to accomplish in their limited free time, such as cooking, shopping, and recreation. Finding qualified staff with special characteristics is difficult for most projects, but finding staff who are able and willing to work evenings and weekends to conduct home visits and adult activities is an additional burden. This challenge is compounded in migrant projects that operate only during the growing season. Not only must they hire staff able to work evenings and weekends but, for some projects, these positions are part-time, available only on a temporary basis, and do not offer benefits.

The solution for projects working with participants who are available only evenings and weekends is to be flexible in service delivery and provide services during these times. This includes conducting home visits and parent activities during evenings and weekends and collaborating with community agencies who will do the same. This is the only option for projects that hope to involve migrant families in which both parents work long hours in the fields or in processing plants, and migrant projects seem to realize that they must adapt their hours to the families' schedules because the reverse is not possible.

To address the part-time nature of the job, several projects found that coordinating outreach and recruitment with another agency, such as the MEP, and hiring part-time staff avoids duplication of efforts and works well for both agencies. Two projects that we visited used this approach and employed home visitors who worked part-time for Even Start and part-time as MEP recruiters. This also helped in staff retention because employees had the equivalent of a full-time position.

Collaborating With Other Community Agencies

Each of the three projects that we visited experienced problems related to the lack of collaboration and coordination among community agencies dealing with migrant families. Community agencies serving migrant families have different goals, eligibility criteria, regulations, and policies that can lead to misunderstandings, duplication of services, and a lack of coordination and collaboration. This lack of coordination among agencies serving migrant families is well documented in the literature (Pindus et al., 1992; National Commission on Migrant Education, 1992). A recent study of the Migrant Education Program emphasized that, in particular, coordination among preschool programs serving migrant children is not widespread (Strang et al., 1993). In fact, collaboration between Migrant Even Start and Migrant Head Start is a concern for two of the Migrant Even Start projects visited.

Project staff feel that many of these problems need to be resolved at the local level. To effectively serve migrant families, community agencies must work together to increase communication and coordination. To improve community collaboration, the Pennsylvania project developed a network of agencies serving migrant families and established regular communication with all of the key players. This project and others also hire staff who work part-time at other migrant community agencies, which further helps to increase communication among agencies.

In addition to the practices and procedures being implemented at the local level, national attention has been given to the lack of coordination between migrant programs for preschool children. In 1993, leaders from the Migrant Education Program and Migrant Head Start organized a national meeting to address these concerns and increase coordination between the two programs. State-specific work plans were developed to address areas for improved collaboration such as recruitment, kindergarten transition plans for children, joint monthly meetings, joint parent training, shared transportation, and shared materials (Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training, 1993).

Continuity of Services Between the Home Base and Receiving Sites

Migrant projects working with families who relocate for large portions of the year must deal with interruptions in services when families travel to another site or back to their home base. Receiving services in different locations during different times of the year can be quite disruptive to progress being made by migrant family members. This is true for parenting goals as well as for specific skills being learned in early childhood education and adult education.

The three projects visited vary in the extent to which they coordinate services with other sites. Wisconsin, as part of a multi-state consortium, has built continuity of services into their basic program model and has instituted several effective practices to facilitate coordination and communication among sites. These include transferring family files and records between sites when the family migrates, maintaining communication among the sites through the project coordinator, and holding an annual staff meeting for staff from all sites. In addition, a staff member in one branch of the project travels with families back and forth from Texas to Montana.

There is less continuity built into the other two projects. The Arizona project collaborates informally with the Even Start project in Salinas, California and provides families with copies of records and vital information to bring with them to California. The Pennsylvania project would like to collaborate with the Migrant Even Start in Florida but has not yet been able to establish communication with the Florida project.

Ensuring continuity of services is a major challenge for Migrant Even Start projects, especially in situations where the family moves to a location in which the Even Start project has no connections to migrant services. When projects are unable to make any contact with other agencies, staff encourage families to seek out nearby Migrant Even Start projects as well as other agencies offering services for migrant families.

Even when services are coordinated among sites, the curriculum and methods of instruction may vary. This is an issue for the Wisconsin project where the adult education classes in the home base and the receiving sites use different curricula. It was difficult for the participants to make a smooth transition to the different materials, which further impeded attempts to encourage participants to continue their studies while migrating from one site to another. For multi-state efforts such as the Wisconsin project, it is important to coordinate services and curricula across sites. Staff in Wisconsin were not successful in coordinating the adult education curricula across all seven sites during the project's first year but they are hoping to increase continuity in their second year of operation.

Providing Support Services

Many of the migrant families served by the Even Start projects have multiple needs, such as health care, transportation, and child care. These Migrant Even Start projects take a holistic approach to serving migrant families. They provide the requisite services in early childhood education, adult education, and parent education, but they also provide necessary support

services such as health care, transportation, child care with extended hours, and community activities.

Child care is a particularly urgent need in many migrant families because both parents work long hours. Most agencies working with migrant families try to offer full-day child care but there are times when structured care is not available, especially for school-age children. Projects try to collaborate with other agencies and share resources to fill in the gaps but the limited services in these areas remain an issue for projects. Often there just are not enough funds to fulfill all of the needs in the community.

Providing home-based services poses additional challenges for Migrant Even Start projects. As a result of their frequent moves and limited housing space in receiving sites, migrant families often have only the bare essentials with them, leaving behind excess furniture, books, toys, and other household and personal items. The lack of resources in migrant households is an issue when projects encourage parents to use everyday household items in educational activities with their children. To compensate for the family's limited resources, many projects provide additional support services by operating toy and book lending libraries and bringing different types of materials such as scissors, magazines, and plastic containers to the homes that can be left behind for families to use for parent-child activities.

The limited space available for project staff to work with families in their homes and the limited space for parents to work with their children at home adds to the challenge of providing home-based services. The lack of available space for community activities also is a barrier for projects. Some projects use space provided by local churches and community agencies. The Wisconsin project is hoping to obtain space in one of the local migrant housing camps to conduct group activities for families.

Dealing With Isolation in the Community

Migrant families experience greater isolation than most families and are sometimes referred to as "the invisible community." Some of the reasons stem from language and cultural barriers but a large factor in families' isolation is their frequent moves and long work hours, especially for families in which both parents work. Migrant families have little time or opportunity to participate in recreational and community activities held for non-migrant families such as scouts and sports teams. Their long work hours also prevent parents from getting involved in school activities and maintaining communication with their childrens' teachers. In addition, families are often not aware of or are reluctant to apply for services in the community to which they may be entitled.

Effective practices that projects have used to deal with these challenges include extensive outreach to parents, organizing community activities for parents to increase their socialization opportunities with other families, and forming relationships with community groups that can offer services to families. The Pennsylvania project involves the local college in a tutoring program in which college students work individually with participants. The program also

provides access to college facilities for the families and community activities co-sponsored by the project and the college.

Other ways projects confront families' isolation is through advocacy. Staff encourage parents to apply for community services and work with agencies to ensure that families receive needed services. Staff also accompany participants to appointments with school personnel, with local housing agencies, and with other community agencies.

Materials Written in Spanish

The lack of quality children's literature in Spanish and materials written in Spanish for parents in areas such as parenting, child development, health education, nutrition, and community resources are both major problems for most Migrant Even Start projects. Projects deal with this issue by translating important materials and community notices, but this is a labor-intensive and time-consuming process that is not always an option for lengthy materials. Efforts also are made to share materials with community agencies serving Hispanic families and to encourage local libraries and community groups to obtain more Spanish materials. One project site in Wisconsin has collaborated very successfully with the local library, which has purchased a variety of books written in Spanish and displays them near the library entrance for easy access by parents and children.

Chapter Seven

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The descriptions of three Migrant Even Start projects presented in this report highlight unique program features and reveal a myriad of challenges that these projects face in providing Even Start services to migrant families. In this chapter, we briefly review some of the distinctive characteristics of the Migrant Even Start projects that differ from regular Even Start projects. We conclude with recommendations for supporting and strengthening Migrant Even Start projects.

Unique Features of Migrant Even Start Projects

Most of the challenges experienced by Migrant Even Start projects result from trying to provide services that are responsive to the needs of migrant families yet true to the Even Start model of providing services in adult education, parent education, early childhood education, and parent-child activities in a home-based setting. Below we briefly summarize the unique features of the Migrant Even Start projects visited.

Participant Characteristics

Migrant Even Start projects must develop strategies to address the two primary characteristics of migrant families that set them apart from most other Even Start participants — adults work long hours and families move frequently in search of work. In addition, the majority of families in the Migrant Even Start projects are Hispanic, either monolingual Spanish or limited-English-proficient, and have an elementary-level education. These characteristics differ from the typical Even Start participant, who is unemployed, a single parent, English-speaking, has a ninth or tenth grade education, and is white or African-American.[9] The special characteristics of migrant families affect the type of staff needed, the hours of operation, and the support services that Migrant Even Start projects provide.

Families' Commitment to the Project

Although characteristics of migrant families create challenges for service delivery, migrant families also have many positive features that facilitate recruitment and program

[9] Data from more than 10,000 families participating in Even Start during the 1991-92 program year reveal that only 18 percent of Even Start participants are Hispanic, 72 percent report that their primary language is English, 72 percent are unemployed, nearly 40 percent are single parents, and the majority have some education at the high school level (St.Pierre et al., 1993).

participation. Most notably, the early childhood and adult education services provided by Even Start are in great demand by migrant families. Parents' employment status, particularly in those sites where both parents work full-time, necessitates a full-day program for young children and parents are eager to enroll their children in the early childhood program. Project staff report that migrant adults also are very motivated to attend adult education classes to learn English and to attain a GED certificate to improve their future employment opportunities. This willingness to participate despite tremendous work and family responsibilities shows a commitment to the project that is not seen for participants in all regular Even Start projects.[10]

Staff Commitment to the Project

During our observations of project activities and discussions with staff, we were struck by the commitment and perseverance of the Migrant Even Start staff. It was clear that their approach to services is to adapt to the needs of the families rather than to ask the families to accommodate to a more traditional program structure. For example, the timing of home visits are scheduled when it is convenient for families, even though that means conducting home visits during evenings and weekends. Project staff also are very responsive to families' needs, both because some staff are former migrants themselves and because staff have a lot of experience working with migrant families.

Intensity of Program Services

Families' work schedules and migrant lifestyle limit the amount of time that families can participate in Even Start services. Therefore, Migrant Even Start projects cannot offer high-intensity services for adults as is possible in regular Even Start projects. Because migrant families do not have a lot of time to attend classes or participate in home visits, Migrant Even Start projects cannot offer full-day programs or classes on four or five days of the week; adult education generally is offered two to three evenings a week. The effect of this more limited service delivery is exacerbated by the fact that many families do not stay in one area for more than a few months.

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[10]All Migrant Education Even Start projects are included in the national Even Start evaluation and report data describing their program operations, participant characteristics, and participation outcomes on a survey form used by all Even Start projects. The survey data submitted by 11 Migrant Education Even Start projects for the School Year 1994-95 are described in *Even Start Information System: Special Analysis of Migrant Education Even Start Data* (U.S. Department of Education, Planning, and Evaluation Service, 1996). The 11 projects as a group indicated that "improving retention or motivation of participants" was somewhat more problematic than other aspects of service delivery (e.g., recruitment, staffing, and services coordination) although they reported this was not a major problem.

Staffing Pattern

Another consequence of the families' tremendous work responsibilities is that Migrant Even Start services for adults are primarily offered evenings and weekends during the peak periods when the majority of migrant families are on-site. As a result, most projects cannot support full-time staff or twelve-month positions, but instead employ part-time and temporary staff. To accommodate these needs, Migrant Even Start projects try to hire individuals who have other part-time employment. In some cases, Even Start staff have other "day jobs," such as the staff in Wisconsin who also are family day care providers. In other cases, staff piece together jobs across other agencies working with migrant families, such as the MEP. In Arizona and Wisconsin, project administrators divide time between Migrant Even Start and regular Even Start projects. An advantage to this job-sharing is an automatic increase in communication and collaboration across agencies in the community and a sense of teamwork. However, there is not likely to be a full-time project administrator, which differs from the staffing arrangements in many regular Even Start projects.

Recommendations to Support the Migrant Even Start Program

Although they face many challenges, these Migrant Even Start projects have been able to address the majority of issues resulting from the unique characteristics of the migrant families they serve. However, projects cited a need for more technical assistance and support. Several staff indicated frustration with the lack of training and support provided to Migrant Even Start projects from the Department of Education. They feel that they would benefit from more guidance and technical assistance. They also expressed the need for communication and collaboration with other Migrant Even Start projects but have not been able to find support for such activities at the national level. Project staff had several suggestions to decrease project isolation, such as organizing meetings and seminars specific to migrant issues at national Even Start conferences, arranging for migrant projects to attend the same regional conference rather than be spread out across different conferences, and providing specific training and technical assistance to projects working with migrant families.

In this last section, we put forth several recommendations to support the Migrant Even Start projects by addressing the challenges they face and the strengths they offer.

- *Increase collaboration across Migrant Even Start project sites*. The projects visited had varying degrees of collaboration with programs at other sites along the migrant stream. Encouraging more collaboration, both in existing projects and in the design of new projects, would increase the duration and continuity of services for Migrant Even Start families. For example, the approach taken by the Wisconsin project in collaboration with the MEPs in Texas, Illinois, and Montana provides families the opportunity to receive Even Start services year-round. Because migrant families have so little time to participate in Even Start during their peak

work period in the receiving sites, a multi-state consortium that includes the home base and the receiving sites seems to be an effective approach.

- *Encourage communication and collaboration between Migrant Even Start and Migrant Head Start*. Two of the three Migrant Even Start projects visited cited difficulties collaborating with Migrant Head Start. Discussions at the local and national levels about program eligibility and service provision would help projects pool resources, improve communications, and provide coordinated services to eligible migrant families.

- *Offer more technical assistance to Migrant Even Start projects*. Project staff expressed a need for more involvement and technical assistance from the Department of Education. Project staff also would like more opportunities to meet with staff at other migrant projects to discuss service delivery issues and provide service continuity for their families who move across sites. The current practice of holding regional technical assistance conferences makes this collaboration and support difficult, particularly because the migrant projects operate in all regions of the country. If a separate conference for migrant projects is not possible, perhaps inviting all of the migrant projects to attend the same regional conference would be an option for future conferences.

- *Provide opportunities for Migrant Even Start projects to share their experiences with other Even Start projects*. Staff at Migrant Even Start projects have learned to deal with high family mobility, provide flexibility in service hours, and retain staff who reflect families' language and cultural heritage. This expertise would be valuable to other Even Start projects, many of whom face the same types of issues. In addition, increased communication among Migrant Even Start and regular Even Start projects would reduce the sense of staff isolation among migrant projects and improve the integration of the migrant projects into the full Even Start program.

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APPENDIX A

TOPIC GUIDE FOR MIGRANT EVEN START PROJECT SITE VISITS

TOPIC GUIDE FOR MIGRANT EVEN START PROJECT SITE VISITS

A. CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY SERVED *(state director, project coordinator)*

Description of community: urbanicity, economics, size, population, ethnic groups (off-season), population (both in and off-season), major industries, major employers

Characteristics of Even Start migrant families: ethnic groups, languages spoken, household composition, educational level, mobility (e.g., % former migrants, % current migrants, % families who return each year)

Other family programs, adult basic education and preschool programs in the community serving migrant families and their relationship to Even Start, similarities and differences between Even Start and other programs

B. PROGRAM STRUCTURE/ADMINISTRATION *(state director, project coordinator)*

Role of state Even Start migrant education director: relationship/responsibilities to migrant Even Start project, state director of migrant education, and state Even Start coordinator

Number and location of migrant Even Start project sites

Project schedule: time and location of recruitment, number of families recruited per site, length of time families stay in each site, timing of service provision per site

C. RECRUITMENT OF FAMILIES *(project coordinator)*

Eligibility requirements: criteria for Even Start; additional criteria for migrant Even Start

Techniques used to recruit families: staff involved, activities used, involvement of school district, state migrant office, other collaborating agencies, or growers in recruitment/outreach

Effectiveness of strategies: reaching recruitment goals, overall effectiveness, successes and difficulties in recruiting families

Family service plans: procedures used in setting goals, staff involved, family members involved

D. STAFF *(project coordinator/project staff/consultants/collaborating agency staff)*

Staff Positions

Paid staff per site: number, types (professional or paraprofessional), roles and responsibilities, full-time or part-time, location, how they spend their time (e.g., administrative versus service delivery), responsibilities exclusive to Even Start or work with other programs and families, staff qualifications [(e.g., educational background, degrees or certificates, previous experience, knowledge/experience in

literacy development, adult development, early childhood development, community services, migrant families, personal characteristics important for job]

Consultants/staff from community agencies providing Even Start services per site: number, type, role, responsibilities, full-time or part-time, paid by Even Start or community agency, staff qualifications [(e.g., educational background, degrees or certificates, previous experience, knowledge/experience in literacy development, adult development, early childhood development, community services, migrant families, personal characteristics important for job]

Volunteer staff per site: number, types, roles and responsibilities, time commitment, staff qualifications [(e.g., educational background, degrees or certificates, previous experience, knowledge/experience in literacy development, adult development, early childhood development, community services, migrant families, personal characteristics important for job]

Staff Support Services and Issues

Inservice training: frequency, topics, duration, site, who offers, specific training in working with low-income, low-literate or LEP families, types of training most helpful

Staff supervision: who provides, group or individual, frequency, focus of discussion

Relationships among staff: relationship and communication between project staff and staff from school district, collaborating agencies, other Even Start components, changes since start of program

Staff turnover: amount of turnover, has it been a problem, strategies for reducing turnover

Special challenges recruiting and keeping qualified project staff (e.g., bilingual staff)

E. OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM ACTIVITIES *(state director, project coordinator)*

General description of core components **per project site** (adult basic education, early childhood education, parent education): offered by Even Start or collaborating agencies, general description of sites, description of home-based activities, typical weekly schedule of services per site, average participation numbers, special events or activities (e.g., holiday celebrations), parent involvement in project planning, changes in project since start of project and reasons

F. CONTENT/DELIVERY OF EVEN START SERVICES (for each core service at target site)

(project coordinator, project staff, consultants, collaborating agency staff)

Brief description of core service: nature of service/instruction; individual or group, size of group, Even Start only or mixed groups, members of families involved, ages of children involved

Location of services: center or home. If center--type of site, number of sites, number of rooms, description of space, shared or used only by Even Start, changes in location since program inception, adequacy of space for program needs If home--advantages and disadvantages, availability/adequacy of space in home, changes since start of program

Schedule: daily/weekly activities schedule, frequency and duration of services, variation over the year

Participants: number, changes over time/season, number of men/women, characteristics of participants, special populations (handicapped, LEP)

Curriculum materials and instructional methods: types, locally developed, commercially available, how approach/activities (e.g., curriculum materials, sequence, instructional methods) vary with participants' characteristics; sensitivity to differences in culture, language and skill level

Advantages and disadvantages of curriculum and instructional methods; particularly effective materials or instructional practices; changes since start of program

G. COORDINATION OF SERVICE COMPONENTS *(project coordinator)*

Links among adult education, parenting education and early childhood education (e.g., staff, curriculum, training, staff planning); opportunities for parent-child activities

Relationship between Even Start and collaborating agencies: formal or informal arrangements, referral process and procedures, frequency and type of communication (e.g., discussions about families, hiring staff, scheduling decisions, curriculum decisions), joint training, shared events

H. SUPPORT SERVICES *(project coordinator)*

Transportation: where and when provided, type (e.g., Even Start van, bus tokens, school buses, private cars with reimbursement, private staff cars), frequency and schedule of transportation, availability during core services, problems encountered and solutions tried

Child care: offered on-site or at another location (if so, where), ages of children served, child care for siblings available, description of site, hours of operation, availability during core services

Meals: type of meals, frequency, availability during core services, family eligibility/participation

Translators: available, extent of usage, languages involved, availability during core services

Other services (e.g., health care, advocacy, referrals)

I. PARTICIPATION AND FOLLOW-UP STRATEGIES *(project coordinator)*

Length of time average adult and child participates in services per site; participation requirements

Attendance practices: procedures to track attendance, follow-up of absences, policy on open entry/exit

Strategies for participation: special events, incentives, strategies to encourage participation

Follow-up practices: tracking procedures of families when they migrate, use of MSRTS or other record transfer, telephone contact or meetings with receiving/sending state project staff

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Usefulness of follow-up practices, success of follow-up efforts, difficulties in follow-up efforts

J. **EVALUATION AND ESIS (Even Start Information System)** *(state director, project coordinator)*

Local evaluation activities: staff involved, frequency and type of information collected

Appropriateness of ESIS with migrant projects: content of ESIS forms, schedule of data reporting (July)

K. **CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS** *(everyone)*

Perceived impact on families: definition and measurement of success, most important program effects, effects on children, parents, families

Program features most important to its success

Challenges faced by project, unique challenges of serving migrant population

Future challenges anticipated by program

OBSERVATION GUIDE

EVEN START MIGRANT PROJECT SITE: _____

DATE: _____

PROGRAM ACTIVITY _____

When is the activity taking place: day and time

Where is the activity taking place: describe the building (on-site or off-site), describe the room and the atmosphere

Who is leading the activity: Even Start staff or community service provider

Who are the participants: number, adults or children, male or female, age ranges, unique characteristics, Even Start family members only and/or community or non-Even Start family members

What is the program activity: describe what is happening during the activity, what is being presented or discussed, what is the level of participation, how is the activity being received by the participants, are any materials being distributed to the participants, are visual aids being used, is this a regularly scheduled activity with regular participants or is it a one-time activity

Conclusion of activity: how long did the activity last, how did it end